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MODELLING THE PRISON WORLD

Master's Thesis

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I hereby declare that I have written this Master's Thesis independently. Within this thesis, all works directly cited or used have been properly referred to throughout the text, as well as documented in the section entitled "Works Referenced."

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Introduction

The primary objective of this Master's Thesis is the construction of a model of the prison world. With regards to structure, the thesis is composed of two parts. The first part serves to contextualise the rest of the work, and is itself subdivided into three sections (and many sub-sections). These larger sections treat the following topics, in order: the historiography of prison research, and the respective definitions of the key terms *prison world* and *model*. The sub-sections also comment on various considerations relevant to these topics. The second part of this work is subdivided into six sections (also with numerous sub-sections), of which the first five concern the actual elucidation of the different components of the prison world model, as well as certain of their intra-relations. The sixth section amalgamates the various components into a cohesive whole, and also comments on their interrelations. The sixth section also supplements the prison world model via the use of Juri Lotman's concept of the semiosphere (2005). After the central points of the thesis have been summarised, suggestions for the possible directions of future research shall be provided.

The purpose of the sixth section must be clarified. Because the research object of this thesis is the prison world as such, the latter section will be concerned with applying the semiosphere concept to the newly-constructed model (of the prison world). Though mutually complementing one another, the construction of the prison world model and the application of the semiosphere concept to this model are nonetheless two independent procedures. Since in this scenario one model is being applied to another model — the model of the semiosphere being more abstract than that of the prison world — this section of the work may be understood as a bridging of the two in the form of a metatheoretical analysis. The application of the semiosphere concept as described by Lotman to the prison world model — in order to better conceptualise the prison world as such — may be seen as a secondary, complementary objective of this work.

The research question of this thesis could be formulated thusly: "What are the main features of the prison world, and what are the nature of their relations?" Modelling the prison world is the attempt at answering this question. The construction of the prison world model will be reliant on a diverse range of research materials. These materials are limited to print sources, but include a wide variety of different types of writings whose content pertains explicitly to the

prison: academic-historical overviews, biographical commentary, governmental or institutional reports, journalistic investigations, legal or penological studies, literature (literary art of various genres), official institutional documents, and of course the many works of prison ethnography, prison sociology, prison subculture studies, or accounts that could be seen as belonging to a general field of “prison studies” (and of course, many texts fit into more than one of these categories). On the theoretical level, the construction of the prison world model will be informed by ideas taken from anthropology, literary theory, and semiotics, amongst others. With regards to methodology, then, the following must be made clear: this work is *not* based on empirical research done by the author (such as an ethnographic survey inside of an actual prison).

This thesis is also characterised by the conspicuous omission of a section dedicated to the history of the prison as such. To mitigate this absence, instead of having one section providing a historical overview of the prison, the entire thesis itself shall be permeated with a wide range of historical notes. That is, in the first part of the thesis contextualising the prison world model to be constructed, historical considerations shall be “sprinkled” throughout. And since this model to be constructed purports to be universal (applicable to any and all prison worlds), in constructing this model as well as illustrating its universality in the second part of the thesis, examples shall be taken from prison worlds of many types and from many different historical contexts.

For now it shall do to provide a few key resources pertaining to the history of the prison. For an overview of “prisons in the ages before the prison” — or the use of imprisonment as a punishment in the ancient and medieval worlds, prior to “the large-scale period of prison building and imprisonment that began in seventeenth-century Europe” and the subsequent age of the “birth of the prison” in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries — see Edward M. Peters (1995). For an overview of the birth of the prison proper — positioned in the rise of the “disciplinary society” — see Michel Foucault (1995). For the further evolution of the prison see H. Bruce Franklin’s argument that the new, post-seventeenth century development of the prison is a very much “made in America” phenomenon (1998a), as well as additional minor comments by Tom Wicker (1998). Finally, for a very brief overview of the contemporary era of “hyperincarceration” — rooted in the shift from the Foucauldian disciplinary society to the Foucauldian “security society” — see comments made by Manuela Cunha (2014).

Part I: A Preamble

1.1. On Historiography

1.1.1. On Prison Historians

In 1995, Norval Morris and David J. Rothman — the editors of *The Oxford History of the Prison* — wrote in their introductory article that this large publication was only made possible by the scholarship of “pioneers in the field” whose research began to appear in the 1970s (1995: vii). The two contend that there were three main reasons that historians were inspired to take up the study of the prison (ibid. vii-ix). The first was “the emergence of a keen interest in social history” inspired by Emile Durkheim, a tradition where in order to understand the hidden and unarticulated norms of a society it was useful to study “deviance” from it (as in the case of prisoners) (ibid. viii). The second reason was that — on a wider scale — the study of social history began to merge with the study of political history “to explore how societies and governments maintain social order” (ibid.). It thus became fruitful to study non-elite, ordinary people — minorities, women, workers, those outside of leadership in business, diplomacy, or government, etc. — and their activities in public settings (including punitive ones such as executions), and it was within this tradition that the work of Foucault was seminal, but also not without its critics¹ (ibid.). And the third reason was because of the prison’s “declining legitimacy” in the United States (USA) and Europe, beginning in the 1960s and exemplified by the 1971 Attica riot: “Once established organizations become suspect, the curiosity of historians is immediately stimulated” (ibid. ix). It was also throughout this period that the federal “hands

¹ Morris and Rothman write (1995: viii): “Not by training or temperament a historian, Foucault used history as a text on which to ground a discussion of power and authority in Western civilization. As exemplified by his book *Discipline and Punish*, he eschewed archival research and had little appreciation for nuances of time and place. He wrote as though phenomena separated by decades were one and as though all the universe were France. Most important, he frequently conflated official rhetoric and daily realities; let public officials announce a program for the surveillance or the reform of criminals, and he presumed its realization. But however serious these flaws, Foucault endowed the history of incarceration with a special meaning. The prison became the representative institution of industrial society, the perfect realization of the modern state. Study the prison and understand bourgeois society: this enticing formulation inspired a number of historians.”

off” approach towards how American prisons were run began to be replaced by direct federal intervention, instigated by the prisoners’ rights movement and prisoner litigation (ibid.). On the basis of such historical scholarship, Morris and Rothman came to this conclusion (ibid. vii):

“[Prisons] appear so monumental in design and so intrinsic to the criminal justice system that it is tempting to think of them as permanent and fixed features of Western societies[.] Meting out punishment by a calculus of time to be served seems so commonsensical today, that it becomes difficult to conceive of a moment when prisons were not at the core of criminal justice.”

The two editors stressed that prisons do indeed have a history, and that prior to the eighteenth century “the prison was only one part, and by no means the most essential part, of the system of punishment” (ibid.). Furthermore, it is not just the system of criminal justice that has undergone massive changes; once implemented, the prison itself has undergone “fundamental alterations in appearance and organization” over the decades and centuries (ibid.).

The first article in this publication was illustrative of these points. In it, Peters gave an overview of the practices of imprisonment and types of prisons used amongst the Babylonians, ancient Egyptians, antique Greeks, Philistines, Hebrews, Assyrians, and Persians, through to developments found within the Roman Republic and Roman Empire, and up to early medieval Europe and the role of the prison in the criminal justice of the Angles, Franks, Lombards, Ostrogoths, Saxons, and Visigoths (1995: 3-26). Following that, he traced the development of the prison in the canon law of the Latin Christian Church — regarding the evolutions stemming from both monastic as well as inquisitorial prisons — from the fifth century onwards, relating it to the development of the prison in the context of the secular law developed in both the “proto-modern” worlds of England as well as continental Europe (France, Iberia, Germany, the Low Countries, Scandinavia) (ibid. 26-45). Eventually, the argument goes, the prison as such centralised within Italian criminal justice from about the thirteenth century onwards, from whereon it became a model for the rest of European and Western civilisation (ibid. 36-45).

1.1.2. On Prison Sociology

While historians began publishing their works in the 1970s, according to Wayne Gillespie in the USA “[s]cientific inquiry on imprisonment [had already] commenced during the first half of the

twentieth century,” being by now divisible into two broad historical phases (2003: 35). The first of these phases refers to roughly the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, and is known as the period of *classical correctional research* (ibid.). According to James B. Jacobs this tradition began with a handful of sociological prison studies in the 1930s, and then developed into the “core prisoner subculture tradition in sociology” in 1940 with the publishing of Donald Clemmer’s *The Prison Community*, reaching its pinnacle with Gresham Sykes’ 1958 work *Society of Captives* (1979: 2-3). The Clemmer-Sykes paradigm of classic research created a score of concepts which became central to prison sociology, on the basis of which not only their works but also a plethora of future works were written (ibid.; Gillespie 2003: 35, 64).

The first of these concepts was the *prisoner subculture*, which these authors attempted to define, positing it as a subsystem of the wider socioculture, “a unique, subterranean social order inside prison” involving an illegitimate “system of power and interchange,” which “includes specific normative expectations, values, and [behaviours]” (Gillespie 2003: 35, 39). Behaviour specifically was meant to be aggressive and predatory — especially regarding money, property, and sex — while primary values were posited as in-group loyalty or solidarity, physical strength, and violence (especially sexual) (ibid. 40). This normative system hinged on the second central concept of the Clemmer-Sykes tradition: the *inmate code* (ibid.). The inmate code was posited as the *Magna Carta* of prisoners, or the inclusive system of special beliefs and norms that prisoners must adhere to and which represented an organisation of criminal behaviours and values in clearcut opposition to those of conventional society and its out-groups (ibid.; Jacobs 1979: 2, 20-21). And seeing as prison officials were understood as representatives of society, relationships with them could only be exploitative or manipulative, never cooperative or supportive; those who stood most opposed were given the most prestige and status (Gillespie 2003: 40, 42).

The inmate code was a system of rewards and sanctions, of prescriptions and proscriptions (ibid. 42). It was a system of ‘values and norms in the form of injunctions (“do’s” and “don’ts”) guiding prisoners’ behavior and defining typical social roles that could be found across diverse prison populations’ (Cunha 2014: 224). These social roles were called *argot roles* by Sykes — defined as the functionally interlocking system of distinctive and unique social roles found in prison (Jacobs 1979: 2, 20-21) — and they composed the third central concept of the

classic Clemmer-Sykes paradigm. Argot roles are a network of positions found in the prisoner subculture (Gillespie 2003: 42), of which Sykes identified eleven: rats and center men, gorillas and merchants, wolves and punks and fags, ball busters and real men, and finally toughs and hipsters (in Jacobs 1979: 2). Each grouping of argot roles is organised according to “the primary axes of prison life” — or what Sykes described as the *deprivations* of the prison — which came in the form of five *pains of imprisonment*: deprivation of autonomy, of goods and services, of heterosexual relations, of liberty, and of security (ibid. 2-3; Gillespie 2003: 41).

Sykes’ description of the deprivations of the prison tied in to the efforts of classic correctional research to determine the etiology of the prisoner subculture (Gillespie 2003: 35-36). This tradition thus originated a fourth central concept, that of the *deprivation model* — also the “indigenous influence theory” or “indigenous origin” model — understanding of the prisoner subculture, in which “the inmate subculture emerged as a direct result of the adjustment problems that are particular to life inside prison” and “arose in order to compensate for [its] deprivations” (ibid. 41; Jacobs 1979: 3). That is, “prison culture [was theorised] as a collective response to obviate an array of material and moral deprivations entailed by imprisonment, thus as a mechanism with roots in prison itself” with the “entire machinery of the inmate subculture [being] an attempt to alleviate deprivations” (Cunha 2014: 224; Gillespie 2003: 42).

Within this model, the prison and criminal justice in general were seen as directly attacking the inmate in response to his violation of the law, a situation which the inmate felt profoundly; thus labelled, inmates and their “problems of adjustment [...] require a collective, subcultural response” (Gillespie 2003: 41). Jonny Steinberg emphasised Sykes’ idea that the inmate is not frustrated “as an individual” but as “one of the many” (2004: 14). That is, Sykes wrote that as frustrations — and the “profound hurt” in the form of “threats or attacks which are directed against the very foundations of the prisoner’s being” — build, the “individual’s picture of himself as a person of value” or “morally acceptable, adult male who can present some claim to merit in his material achievements and his inner strength” thus “begins to waver and grow dim” (in ibid. 13). This leads to two possible scenarios: new inmates either cultivate solidarity with fellow inmates by appropriating the inmate code to regain agency, or enter into a personal “war of all against all” (in ibid. 13-14).

The second historical phase of prison-sociological research — its *contemporary scholarship* — refers to roughly the last third of the twentieth century (Gillespie 2003: 35). Its earliest articulation was in 1962, when John Irwin and Donald Cressey broke with the underlying assumptions of the deprivation model by arguing that the prisoner subculture was “rooted in criminal and conventional subcultures outside the prison,” thus positing an *importation model* (also called the “importation hypothesis” and/or “cultural drift theory”) (ibid. 42; Jacobs 1979: 3). Regarding the importation model, Cunha noted (2014: 224):

“Irwin and Cressey [...] would later argue that although [the prisoner subculture] provided a means to cope with imprisonment, it was not generated by prison-specific properties but was instead a coalescence of external subcultures imported into the prison.”

Importations were posited as being from “the latent [...] street culture to which most prisoners belonged prior to their incarceration” (Gillespie 2003: 42). Gillespie wrote (ibid. 42-43):

“[In 1980] Irwin [...] suggested that the inmate code was itself a prison adaptation of the thieves’ code [by observing] that thieves were the most frequent criminal type imprisoned in the Big House. They had a strong communication network which ensured that their values would be imported from the outside and become permanent fixtures of the inmate subculture. Their code dominated the correctional facilities of the early twentieth century. The inmate code could easily be extrapolated from the thieves’ code. Specifically, [thou shalt not snitch] became [do not rat], do not openly interact with the guards or the administration, and do your own time.”

The logic behind the earliest formulation of the importation model was that a member of the thief subculture would necessarily end up in prison at one point in their life, so the “thief code” and its prison-house adaptation gave thieves a way to survive their situation (ibid. 43). The inmate subculture was therefore an “institutionalized version of the outside, criminal subculture” and “drifted inside prison from the outside” (and therefore “did not originate in response to problems encountered inside prison”) (ibid.).

1.1.3. On the Transition from Big Houses to Jungle Prisons

After the Quaker-inspired Walnut Street Prison — the so-called “cradle of the penitentiary” — was built in Philadelphia in 1790, in the 1820s two other American prisons were built which

“served as models for prison construction throughout Europe and the northern United States”: Cherry Hill in Pennsylvania and Auburn in New York State, the former being the prototype for the so-called *separate system*, and the latter being the prototype for the so-called *silent system* (Franklin 1998a: 3). By the end of the nineteenth century, the Auburn system had become the dominant prison system in the northern USA (see Megan Fowler 2015: 373, 375). While imprisonment in the post-Civil War South was characterised by the gradual transformation of slave plantations into actual penitentiaries, the context of the North was characterised by what Franklin called “the early modern American prison” (1998a: 4-8).

It was within this context that the *Big House* style of prison was born, a term originated by Irwin (Gillespie 2003: 36-37, 65). A Big House was a repressive, yet relatively-safe style of prison, and in Irwin’s view the “Big House was the source of images and illusions that continue to obscure the contemporary prison. Some of these images and illusions were created by sociologists who began investigating the prison in the 1930s and have since become the authorities on life there” (in *ibid.*). Gillespie noted: “In sum, the Big House was a context that exerted its influence upon both the inmates doing time there and the sociologists who studied them” (*ibid.* 37). The Big House was thus the “context that most scientific inquiry on imprisonment began” and wherein Clemmer, Sykes, and their followers first posited the notions of a prisoner subculture, inmate code, argot roles, and the deprivation model (*ibid.* 36-37, 65).

The importation model, however, was born at the time of the prison’s “declining legitimacy,” what Franklin called the time of “the movement” (1998a: 11-12). The general American context of the mid-1960s was a time of protest and rebellion — a time when political and social movements such as the black liberation movement, the civil rights movement, “movements for peace, the liberation of peoples of color, women’s equality, gay rights, and economic democracy” were all merging into “one side of the culture wars of late-twentieth-century America” — characterised by various paradigmatic events: the Mississippi Freedom Summer murders, uprisings of the “long, hot summers” and the murder of Martin Luther King, the Vietnam War, etc. (Franklin 1998a: 11-13). Wicker wrote: “American society was torn by protest — against the oppression of blacks, the war in Vietnam, unresponsive government, fossilized society, predatory capitalism” (1998: xii).

This general “movement” was “fed in complex ways by the nation’s prisons”; it was at this time that prisoners — and those who would later become prisoners — became extensively radicalised by surrounding events (Franklin 1998a: 11-12). For Wicker, one example of such revolutionary radicalisation was the 1971 Attica prison uprising; he also noted that it ‘was not surprising, therefore, that the rhetoric of prison orators was heavily Marxist: “Oppressed peoples of the world, throw off your chains!” ’ (though he also warns that the political consciousness developed in prisons was oftentimes no more than a fight for the improvement of local, situational comforts without any regard for wider societal ills) (1998: xii). Regardless, that an awareness or consciousness *did* develop is clear: in the context of the movement prisoners were no longer viewed by “reformers and even revolutionaries as victims to be rescued by progressive social movements,” but as a “potential revolutionary vanguard” (Franklin 1998a: 11-12). This vanguard was anchored not in the traditional proletariat, but in the lumpenproletariat “as the true revolutionary class” (exemplified by the release of Malcolm X’s autobiography in 1965) (ibid.).

As the racial discrimination and segregation characteristic of American society began to be challenged in the 1950s and 60s, the unique vehicle of this challenge in the confines of the prison was the Black Muslim movement² (Jacobs 1979: 6-7). As chronicled by Jacobs, the Muslims initiated a new era of federal court intervention in the running of prisons via litigation (which they often won) and written demands — for Arabic Korans, group meeting and prayer possibilities, Islamic ministers, Muslim newspapers, pork-free diets, religious medallions, and so on, but most of all to be treated as a bona fide religion not to be censored or unfairly disciplined (called a “cult” and put into punitive separation on the pretense of “violating basic rules”) — as well as the holding of in-prison protests (ibid. 6-9). The Nation’s successes hinged on their claims that “American blacks had been repressed and degraded by white society [and that] white prison officials [were] continuing that repression” (ibid. 8-9). The “ideology of black superiority” “appealed to many black inmates” because it “provided a vehicle for venting

² For an overview of the history of the Nation of Islam and its predecessor Moorish Science Temple outside of prison — as well as the Nation’s role in many paradigmatic events: the proliferation of temples, conversions of Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali) and Malcolm Little (Malcolm X), the Watts riot, and the crystallisation of a general black pride, nationalism, and radicalism made manifest in both the black liberation movement as well as popular culture (books, music singles, etc.) — see Mark Hamm (2007a: 11-18).

frustration and hostility against the prison officials who had assigned blacks to second-class status in an institution which had already denied its inhabitants the rights of citizenship” (ibid.).

The work of the Muslims at the time of the movement politicised African-American inmates (as well as other minorities) and contributed to the new social organisation of the prison: the “balkanization of prisoner society,” which became “a salient characteristic of [the] prisoner subculture ever since” (ibid.). This scenario was now a far cry from the prisoner “community,” “society,” or “subculture” posited by the earlier sociologists of the Big House.

Gillespie noted that in general events outside of prison walls are crucial to understanding those inside of prison walls, and vice versa (2003: 35). Inside of prison, the polarisation of the prisoner subculture instigated by the Black Muslims entailed the separation of this subculture — once posited as a uniform formation — into a multitude of subcultures appearing in the form of *race-based* groupings³ (Jacobs 1979). In this in-prison scenario, instead of opposition being posited between prison officials and prisoners as a whole, a group of prisoners may have an opposition “divided between custodial staff and rival groups,” with solidarity being “more specific and less general” (Gillespie 2003: 60-61). As for the outside of prison, the influence of the Muslims meant that Muslim identities began to “spill over” into “the great urban slums of Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles” (Hamm 2007a: 18). The Muslims were also directly connected to the birth of external groups such as the Black Panther Party, and it was indeed the Black Muslim protests that spurred on the prison’s “declining legitimacy” — or what Jacobs called the “crisis in corrections” — primarily on racial grounds (1979: 7, 18):

³ Hamm has noted that opinion on the Black Muslim phenomenon within American prisons is divided into two arguments (2007a: 16-18). The first takes a positive view, stating that — after many of their demands had been met and many gains had been made by the late 1960s — the Muslims became less aggressive and morphed into a stabilising force within prisons, an articulate and well-organised group spearheading the nascent prisoners’ rights movement (see also Jacobs 1979: 10). As a “distinctive group” or “sizable faction” behind bars — one with a “formidable recruiting presence” — the Black Muslims are a “vital presence in the nation’s penal system” and an important “instrument of criminal justice peacemaking,” evidenced by the mediational role they as well as the Moorish Science Temple played during the Attica riot. The second view is a cynical one, and sees the Nation of Islam as “part of a shifting pattern of deviant social exchanges that provided inmates an explanation for their criminal behaviour by removing individual guilt and shifting it to the oppression caused by white racism,” essentially providing mainly African-American criminals an excuse for their criminal behaviour.

“[P]rison officials have lost confidence in themselves [and] [a]uthority has [...] been lost to the courts and to outside agencies, including centralized correctional bureaucracies. In addition, the legitimacy of prison regimes has been sharply questioned on racial grounds. Several national commissions, academic critics, and numerous prisoner petitions have attacked the hegemony of whites in elite as well as staff positions in the prisons[.] [...] Affirmative action efforts have slowly increased the number of minorities [...] but it is questionable whether this has increased the legitimacy of prison regimes in the eyes of the prisoners.”

The time of the movement then begat what Franklin called the “American Gulag” (1998a: 15):

‘One response to the political and social upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s has been an immense political and social reaction in the 1980s and 1990s. Central to this countermovement has been unrestrained growth of the prison system, harsh mandatory sentences, a “lock ‘em up and throw away the key” media campaign, “three strikes and you’re out” laws, a stampede towards capital punishment, the creation of “supermax” penitentiaries, and abandonment of all pretense that prison should be designed for rehabilitation.’

The movement as such was met with stiff resistance, and alongside the plethora of awarenesses that developed in its context there also emerged “hardline” drug laws and policies affirming more convictions and harsher sentencing for drug offenders (Gillespie 2003: 35-36, 60-65). Just prior to the American Gulag characterising the contemporary USA⁴ — and in line with the

⁴ Between 1980 and 1995 the American prison population tripled, with the “blatantly racist” nature of the American penal system very apparent: by 1993 blacks were imprisoned at a rate nearly seven times greater than whites (nearly two thousand per one hundred thousand blacks imprisoned, and only about three hundred per one hundred thousand whites, a situation which in 1998 was only growing exponentially) (Franklin 1998a: 15-17). For example: Wicker noted that in Bill Clinton’s America “[b]lacks [...] [got] longer sentences for smoking cheap crack than [did] whites for sniffing expensive powdered cocaine” (1998: xiv). For an overview of racist policies leading to the incarceration of blacks in the USA — a strategy rooted in the idea that “[o]ne way to deal with unemployed black men was — and is — to keep them from either competing on the labor market or from having children by sending them up for long terms, no matter what the crime” — see Franklin (1998a). Furthermore, Franklin’s concept of the American Gulag was constructed via analogy with the Russian Gulag; Franklin noted that it was only in Russia — “where the rate of incarceration doubled within three years of the collapse of the Soviet Union” — where the prevalence of incarceration was anywhere the USA (ibid. 16-17). Indeed, the state of California itself held the world’s third largest prison population in 1998, spending more on imprisonment than on higher education (ibid). That is, by the era of the American Gulag the USA had a prison population greater than most other countries of the world combined: “In the twilight of the twentieth century, the United States, birthplace of the modern prison two centuries earlier, has transformed the prison into a central institution of society, unprecedented in scale and influence” (ibid.). This era is also one of oppression: “Son of Sam” and similar laws block free speech and “anti-establishment” views, keeping “the American people in the dark about the American prison” (ibid. 14-15).

reorganisation of the prisoner community following the practices of the Black Muslims — the contemporary prison or modern correctional facility was birthed, with its characteristic features being: dominance of minorities, prevalence of drugs, prevalence of gangs, and severe overcrowding (ibid.). These prisons were — and are — highly unstable and violent, and have often been called *jungle prisons*.

1.1.4. On the Race Relations Approach and the Integration Model

As the early modern American Big House was transforming into the dangerous jungle prison, research began to emphasise its new features. Writing in 1979, Jacobs saw prisoner subculture scholarship as deficient — though moving in the right direction — because of its historical ignorance in relation to what he saw as its most salient feature, one which came to be in the context of the Black Muslim era: *race relations* (1979: 1). Jacobs wondered why a feature obvious to employees, inmates, the media, and visitors was ignored by sociologists in a kind of “color-blind approach⁵” (ibid. 1-3). It was only after Irwin himself in 1970 supplemented the earlier “Irwin-Cressey hypothesis” (importation model) “with explicit attention to the subject of race” that a race relations perspective came to be⁶ (ibid. 10). Jacobs wrote (ibid. 1):

“The oversight [of race relations] is significant; prisons have a long history of segregation and racial discrimination. Descriptions and theories of prisoner subculture which do not take racial cleavages into account are incomplete and need to be reconsidered. Since the late 1950s race relations have precipitated enormous changes in prisoner subcultures and in prison organization. [...] Present-day prisoner subcultures are characterized by racial polarization and conflict, and by the dominance of blacks and other minorities who now constitute the majority of the national prisoner population.”

⁵ He offered possible reasons for this oversight: white sociologists were not sensitive to the prison’s racial caste system, perhaps in prison race relations were actually more “progressive” than in other social contexts (because blacks and whites were integrated to a greater degree than on the outside), or that prisoner subculture research was always a mirror of the “dominant concepts and theories” of sociology (Jacobs 1979: 19). For instance, while Clemmer used popular sociological terms like “culture” and “primary group,” Sykes described the prisoner subculture in terms of the structural/functional paradigm that was dominant at the time (ibid.).

⁶ The race relations approach was itself birthed at a time that sociologists employed conflict theory — a micro-level antithesis to macrological structural/functionalism — in order to study the politics of imprisonment and the overrepresentation of minorities within it (Jacobs 1979: 19).

Gillespie noted that the subculture of the modern prison “substantially diverges from the convict subculture of the Big House” because its social organisation is no longer characterised by an overarching cohesiveness, but “involves many smaller social units centered around issues such as race, criminal orientation, shared pre-prison experiences, shared prison interests, and forced proximity” (2003: 63-64). These “many sociocultural sub-systems” — traditionally called “gangs” — “[vie] for power, goods, and services” and often have codes different from the traditional inmate code and its main tenets of prisoner loyalty and opposition to authority (ibid.). Jacobs also suggested that the old concepts of the Clemmer-Sykes paradigm — which have been criticised on the “grounds of internal consistency, methodology, and inability to find confirmation in empirical studies” — might be aided by incorporating a race relations perspective, asking questions such as: “Is the availability of argot roles racially determined?” “Instead of one inmate code are there multiple, race-based codes?” And so on⁷ (1979: 20).

Depending on what feature is more salient in the prison under investigation, prisoner subculture research could thus oscillate between the classic and the contemporary: the older tradition originated by Clemmer and Sykes that emphasises consensus (holism, inclusion, integration), or the new post-Irwin and Cressey tradition emphasising disintegration (division, factionalism, self-segregation) (ibid. 20-21).

The tensions between these two historical phases can also be lessened by the use of what is known as the *integration model*, the synthesis of both the deprivation and importation models. Cunha wrote that since the ‘first formulation of the “deprivation-importation” debate discussing the endogenous or exogenous basis of [the prisoner subculture], [there are now] more or less integrated versions of the two models in present-day literature’ (2014: 224). Rather than detracting, these two models were actually seen to complement one another in empirical analyses (Gillespie 2003: 44). Moreover, when stated in terms that negate each other, both models were also seen to be faulty (ibid.). The main idea behind the integration model is that while the structural conditions of the prison may create a sufficient situation for the emergence of some

⁷ Other questions could concern whether prisons with black majorities or large minorities are different than ones where they constitute a smaller population, what characterises prisons with three or more racial groupings, whether the same interracial alliances always form in these prisons, and what are the control mechanisms within prisons that “serve to stabilize prisoners’ race relations” (Jacobs 1979: 22-23).

kind of prisoner-subcultural response, they could never account for this adaptation's actual nature (ibid.).

1.1.5. On Prison Ethnography

Jacobs also noted that the “next generation of research should link the prison society, including its patterns of race relations, to both the unique characteristics of prisons and the culture and social structure of the larger society” (1979: 1). And on an even wider scale, an area of research should be how “race relations in prison differ from race relations in other societal contexts” where different races are “involuntarily thrown together” (such as housing projects, the military, and schools), as should studies focusing on regional differences (ibid. 4, 22-23):

“It is a mistake to speak of prisons and prisoner subcultures as if only a single type existed throughout the United States. The distinctive features of each region’s social structure and culture are found in prisons as well as in other political institutions. A comprehensive history of prison race relations would examine each region (and subregion). No such history has yet been written. [...] It should make a difference whether prisons are located in the southwest, with its large Mexican-American population, in the north central states, where native American movements are becoming significant, or in the south, with its distinctive history of paternalistic race relations. Few, if any, of the prisoner subculture studies reported in the literature have been conducted in these regions.”

The concepts developed in American prison sociology were highly influential, but the American paradigm is nevertheless only one tradition in the expansive field of prison ethnography. That being said, Jacobs’ directives for extending the scope of future prisoner subculture research to include wider (regional, societal) contexts — to *branch out* from the prison as such — were very much in line with the transformations taking place in the general field of prison ethnography.

Cunha has provided an overview of prison ethnography from about the time of Jacobs onwards (2014). New prison-ethnographic research concerns itself with working on different analytic scales and frames — from the micro- to the meso- to the macrolevel — and engaging with aspects such as “forms of power, state governance, and cultural and societal transformations,” showing how these external influences have an effect on the prison (ibid. 217-219). Like Gillespie noted earlier, “close-up observation of in-prison aspects illuminate external processes” (ibid.). The aim of new prison ethnography is to study *within* the prison as

well as *around* it (ibid. 218). Researching the prison with regards to its surrounding environment comes in two more or less distinguishable modes: the *prison-in-context* approach which studies the actual contextual situatedness of the prison, and the *interface* approach which studies particular “junctions” that “mediate” prison-society relations (ibid. 217, 225, 227).

The underlying assumption of this new research is that the prison can never be divorced from the wider context(s) or juncture(s) it is embedded in: administrative, cultural, historical, industrial, legal, penological, political, social, societal, technological, etc. At around the time of Jacobs prison ethnography in general began to concern itself not only with the wider situation of embeddedness, but also with the mitigation of parochialism, with “bringing to bear other realities [and] adding perspective” outside of the Anglophone world and American-centred studies (such as the Anglo-American prisoner-subcultural tradition) (ibid. 218, 226). Instead of an “eclipse” or decline in prison research, the focus was on “internationalization” in order to analyse “the diversity of prison systems” and create a “wider comparative landscape” (ibid.):

“Prison ethnographies in cultural contexts besides Anglo-American ones, where the dominant framing of prison studies occurred, show how different cultural varieties of incarceration can combine with globalized forms of penal power. They also contribute to a comparative understanding of the fusing of prison-specific and culture-specific aspects of carceral worlds[.]”

Prison-ethnographic accounts emanating from countries both non-Anglophone and non-American have been plenty: Brazil, France, India, Portugal, Spain, and many countries of the Global South (ibid. 220-226). The new global landscape thus allows for the ability to revisit — ground, compare, and reassess — specific studies, both of different prisons as well as the *same* prison in a different temporal context (including the “systematic articulation of [the prison’s] individual, intersubjective, [sociocultural], and institutional aspects”) (ibid. 226).

Unlike the prison historian (to a certain extent), the prison ethnographer is very much concerned with the here and now of their current situation. As opposed to ancient and medieval worlds, the prisons that developed in the modern world — post-seventeenth century — were “new, large-scale, scientifically managed and organized” (Peters 1995: 44). Moreover, in all criminal justices imprisonment was always a marginal form of punishment in relation to others;

the English “Bloody Code,” for instance, emphasised savage punishment as public spectacle, and prior to the American Revolution “imprisonment was seldom used as a punishment for crime in England and was rarer still in its American colonies. Even in London, between 1770 and 1774 only 2.3 percent of convicted criminals were sentenced to prison⁸” (ibid. 35; Franklin 1998a: 2).

The “horrors of pre-industrial punishment” led reformers to create modern prisons rooted in the Christian conception of penitence⁹ (Franklin 1998a: 3). The idea behind Walnut Street — and the entire American prison system in its early days — was that “if offenders were isolated, shielded from the public mockery that had accompanied hangings and the stocks, given time to repent, and worked hard, they could be turned away from crime and transformed into useful citizens” (Wicker 1998: xiii). The idea of reforming criminals by “incarcerating them, forcing them to work, and preventing them from communicating with each other” led to the creation of the separate system (“where convicts were kept in perpetual solitary confinement”) and the silent system (“where convicts marched in lockstep from their cells to labor together in factory-like settings and were whipped if they spoke”) (Franklin 1998a: 3).

The Auburnian silent system became dominant towards the end of the nineteenth century because “isolating each prisoner in the solitary confinement model had become too costly, leading to an increased focus on industrial production and vocational training in prisons, which was expected to lead to character reformation” (Fowler 2015: 373, 375). The original idea behind the new prisons was therefore that reformation (moral correction or rehabilitation) could be achieved through prisoner *work* (ibid.). However, Franklin wrote (1998a: 3):

‘The modern prison was part of the revolutionary transformation of industry and society that took place between the application of steam power in the 1760s and the American Civil War a century later. As industrial capitalism became dominant, the reformers’ principle that prisoners should work as a means to achieve “reformation” turned into a convenient rationale for using prisons as a source of extremely cheap labor. The Civil War itself hastened this process, as prisoners in the North were forced to produce massive amounts of goods for the Union army.’

⁸ One common punishment was the shipping of tens of thousands of convicts to the American colonies to be used as house servants and plantation labourers; alongside the Bloody Code, resentment towards the use of the colonies as a dumping ground for convicts was a contributing factor to the American Revolution (whereafter England began using Australia as a convict colony) (Franklin 1998a: 2).

⁹ For an overview of the importance of Christianity in the history of the prison, see Peters (1995: 26-32).

As prison became more popular in eighteenth-century criminal justice, it replaced the “theatre of horror” exemplified by the Bloody Code (which itself harkened back to the brutality of ancient Rome) where torture was used mechanically, executions were aggravated and spectacular, and the “body of the condemned became the map of the offense and the sole subject of legal vengeance” (Peters 1995: 14-23, 44). Public executions were meant to intimidate and scare, “the monarch and his subordinates zealously us[ing] the occasion to bolster the authority of royal government” (Morris and Rothman 1995: vii). But as times changed — because “the crowd had begun to identify with the victim, not the executioner” and “the spectacle had become revolting, offending a new sensibility about pain and bodily integrity” — the need for an alternative punishment was needed (ibid.). However — as evidenced by the crisis of the prison’s declining legitimacy exemplified by the brutal conditions found in Attica centuries later — the philanthropic explanation of the prison (that it represented “a burgeoning spirit of benevolence and humanitarianism” in relation to older punishments) came to be rejected by historians (ibid. ix). Historians were thus haunted by the following question: “Why the prison?” (ibid.).

Foucault’s answer was that it was precisely the development of industrial capitalism which kickstarted the emergence of the new disciplinary society. And in the new eighteenth-century society, the prison became central to criminal justice and also itself underwent various subsequent transformations. Fowler has summarised Foucault’s central ideas (2015: 375):

‘[...] Foucault wrote about the changing nature of power relations in imprisonment from punishment of the body to control of the mind and soul, as epitomized in his prime example, Bentham’s Panopticon, which Foucault used as a metaphor for society as a whole. [...] [He] goes so far as to argue that the Panopticon can be viewed as a “generalizable model of functioning” and a “way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men.” [He] described the Panopticon as a power mechanism in its ideal form [and] believes that the ideas behind the Panopticon, so called “Panopticism,” have so pervaded the everyday thinking and functioning of society that it has bred a “disciplinary society,” a “society of surveillance.” ’

Foucault saw Panopticism negatively, as a form of dehumanising and demeaning mind control (Fowler 2015: 378-379). The disciplinary society — the age of the birth of the prison — is one characterised by not only work, but also *surveillance*. The main goal of *discipline* as such — a form of surveillance- and work-based power permeating all of society — is to produce “a

peaceful and useful citizen” (Morris and Rothman 1995: xii). In this context, the rise of the prison is only natural; on the part of the state, it is an efficient way to “reform the criminal, to change him from a social danger and an economic liability” into a citizen proper (ibid.).

However — as seen in the rise of the American Gulag — society soon lost this semi-religious, reformatory ideal. The disciplinary society was characterised by two parallel shifts. The first, as noted earlier, was from isolation — separation leading to self-reflection and contrition in the prisoner — to work (as a way of reforming the individual), which explains the movement from the Pennsylvania to the dominance of the Auburn prison system. The second was from reformation itself to retribution¹⁰; for instance, Fowler has noted that while Pennsylvanian prisons emphasised reformation, the Auburn system soon began to emphasise *revenge*, or that inmates should face a “machine-like [...] severely punishing experience” (2015: 374-375). In a certain sense, these two shifts became intertwined when the use of prison labour became distorted in the name of exploitation¹¹. And these shifts also entailed the movement away from the disciplinary society to a different type of society as described by Foucault, one that had already broken its emphasis on reformatory discipline: the *security society*.

It was within the security society of the 1970s onwards that the American Gulag came about. For Cunha, the “inflated prison populations” of today result from “the rise in incarceration

¹⁰ Prison historians are also concerned with the question of the *function* of the prison, of which Morris and Rothman elucidate four: incapacitation (the “original justification of the prison” in the form of the jail), deterrence, reformation, and retribution (expiation) (1995: ix-xi).

¹¹ For examples of such exploitation see Franklin, who gave an overview of chattel slavery, the Thirteenth Amendment (meant to abolish slavery but which in actuality wrote slavery *into* the Constitution), the “Black Codes,” convict leasing, the state use method of convict labour (regarding both goods/products and services), and the state account method of prison production (wherein some state-run plantations “dwarfed the largest cotton plantations of the slave South in size, brutality, and profitability”) in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century American South (1998a). He also gave examples of prisoner slavery in the North, and describes its imposition by the American government for the profits of private manufacturers: “The systematic use of prisoners as slave laborers in the South was hardly a secret. The scale was massive, chain gangs were everywhere, the prisoners were overwhelmingly black, and this new form of slave labor played a central role in the economy. In the North, prison slavery was on a smaller scale, was mostly concealed within the walls of the penitentiaries, was predominantly white, and played a somewhat different role in the political economy, mainly serving as a weapon to be used against the burgeoning union movement” (ibid.).

rates in most liberal democracies since the past three decades of the twentieth century,” which were “led by the exceptional hyperincarceration in the United States” (2014: 219-220). She further noted that Foucault — who “had not predicted this carceral boom and considered prison as an analyzer of society, as a condensed instance of a wider disciplinary rationality pervading society in a specific historical period” — had nevertheless “identified a subsequent historical shift” from the disciplinary society to a security society “based on risk management” (ibid.)

The aim of the security society “is no longer to change people but instead to keep danger at bay. It is not focused on correction but on defense and is more concerned with assessing, managing, and preventing risks than with redressing offenders’ behavior or reintegrating those in the margins of society through welfare” (ibid.). On the very general level, a security society is characterised by the standardisation of approaches as well as an emphasis on *managerialism*: “organizational performance, measurable processes, administrative efficacy, and cost-effectiveness” (ibid. 220). The latter society has no thought towards transforming the individual (ibid.). And regarding prisons explicitly: “Rehabilitation interventions centered on prisoners’ needs are redefined by the assessment and management of the risk they may pose for public security, together with a postdisciplinary stress on prisoners’ individual responsibility and a volitionist emphasis on their autonomous capacity of choice as moral agents” (ibid. 219-220).

In the security society, the breaking of the rehabilitative ideal — exemplified by post-“movement” legislation culminating in the American Gulag — and the new “retributionist turn” were motivated by underlying economic reasons. Cunha wrote that although the security-based “rationality harbored a liberal critique to the excesses of coercive and intrusive disciplinary power, it also fitted well with punitive penal populism, in a growing culture of crime control that appealed to purely retributionist [...] punishment, devoid of rehabilitation goals” (ibid. 219). She also noted that some authors “have theorized the current penal expansion as mainly resulting from an increase in punishment rather than an increase in crime” (ibid.):

‘Instead of analyzing the rise in imprisonment rates within a narrow criminological frame, seeking to connect it with fluctuations in crime rates, [theorists have] matched it with inequality, the neoliberal transformation of the state, and the regulation of postindustrial poverty. Market and labor deregulation coupled with shrinking social welfare, disciplinary social policies, and a stronger cultural emphasis on individual responsibility have converged to

exacerbate social inequality in several countries and to deteriorate the social conditions of an urban precariat, whose problems and disorders are addressed by the penal system. And if “governing through crime” [...] gains appeal in postindustrial societies, albeit to varying degrees, it is also because the state reasserts public authority mainly through the penal system.’

Wicker has noted that the American Gulag is the product of a certain type of thinking in which ‘incarceration is seen primarily as deserved punishment, the harsher the better, for “murderers, rapists, and thieves,” rather than as an opportunity to redeem the offender’ (1998: xiii). But this retributionist stance — one could say “superstructure” — is underlaid by nothing more than a “substructure” of postindustrial economics which create security societies “governed by crime” (Cunha 2014: 226, 219). And these societies are now seen on a global level (ibid.).

Within these new societal contexts, the role of surveillance and work have changed. At the level of the prison, prison labour no longer acts on “prisoners’ dispositions, inducing regularity and self-control,” but has become a way for prisoners to function as economic participants and “purchase consumer goods” (ibid. 220). And instead of technological surveillance (“permanent monitoring”) in prison used with an overarching purpose to produce “docile bodies,” it is now used to “maximize security” (ibid.).

It must also be noted that the shift from the reformative to the retributionist function of the prison is not a scenario of total replacement; that is, the two do not necessarily cancel each other out. For instance, the retributionist function of the prison emerged in the context of an era (the disciplinary society) dominated by its reformative function. And even in the security society, Fowler has pointed out that while the contemporary American prison system emphasises punishment, the Scandinavian one has as its primary goal rehabilitation (2015: 377-378). Echoing this example, Cunha wrote of two dimensions of imprisonment — the economic and the moral — which coexist in the security society: “The rehabilitative ideal did not disappear with the [retributionist] turn altogether, and neither did it decline to the same degree everywhere. [...] Accountability in today’s [prisons] is not [...] limited to an economic dimension; it is also endowed with a moral meaning” (2014: 220-221). That is, the “prison incurs a fundamental suspicion of illegitimacy within a framework of human rights that sets limits on punishment and has periodically inspired prison reforms in most liberal democracies. Expectations of decency,

respect for prisoners' dignity and rights, and humanization in carceral treatment — also part of a liberal ethics of power — have motivated guidelines and standards regarding living conditions, prisoners' basic opportunities, and entitlement" (ibid.).

Furthermore, rather than dismissing "this orientation as a mere front disguising the deleterious effects of imprisonment [in] a punitive political atmosphere, it is more productive to examine the concrete modalities by which this orientation exists with other, contradictory forces within the [prison]; how it is implemented or recedes in specific circumstances; and how formal guarantees are not enough to ensure fairness and equity" (ibid.). It would therefore be pertinent to study how "formalization" "moderates and contains the excesses of [...] power insofar as it contributes to minimize overt discrimination and provides prisoners with the means to challenge blatant arbitrariness" (ibid.). Finally, Cunha concluded by stating that there "is thus a long-term tendency across liberal democracies toward the moralization of the [prison] through [...] humanization [...] and stricter regulation [...] of power" (ibid.).

It is noteworthy that in her article providing an overview of the large field of prison ethnography that Cunha necessarily "sprinkles" historical considerations throughout the text. Like Clemmer, Sykes, and their followers who conducted their studies in Big Houses — or Irwin, Cressey, and Jacobs, amongst others, who conducted their studies in the race relations era (or just prior) — contemporary prison ethnography is contextualised within the larger security society it is situated in, so the features of this societal context are necessarily prominent parts of the studies done both *in* as well as *around* specific prisons (whether research is being conducted in a jungle prison, is comparing multiple prisons in the American Gulag, is being done in a non-Anglophone and/or non-American setting, is emphasising context or interface, and so on).

1.2. On the Prison World

1.2.1. On Containment

The above considerations also hint at the following truism: on both a synchronic as well as diachronic scale, prisons as such come in a diversity of forms. It is obvious that a plantation prison and a Big House prison of the early twentieth century are non-identical, just as a Big

House prison is non-identical with a later jungle prison, or a twenty-first century American prison is not identical with a twenty-first century Portuguese prison (Cunha 2014: 226). Each and every prison possesses specific contours, often determined by context: antiquity, Middle Ages, Foucauldian era, etc. The aim of this work is to construct a model able to subsume the specificity of these contours; the model to be constructed also purports to be a model of the *prison world*.

A prison world is to be understood as nothing more than the world *inside* of a prison. The *prison* itself is to be understood as a closed and isolated formation, a bounded entity distinctly separable from its surrounding context (the *outside* as such). Every prison has its own prison world. Though there is a nuance which differentiates the two terms, they shall nevertheless be used more or less interchangeably in the context of this thesis (both retroactively and as follows). In her overview of prison ethnography, Cunha used a variety of terms — “carceral context,” “carceral field,” “carceral site,” “carceral scene,” “carceral world,” “confinement setting,” “prison premise,” “world behind bars,” etc. — as synonyms for “prison,” understood exactly in terms of being a closed formation with its own internal world (ibid. 218-227). To speak of *the* prison world is misleading; such an entity can only ever be an abstraction — a generalised or “idealised” composite — of many *different* prison worlds. The model of the prison world to be constructed is therefore nothing but this abstraction, an attempt at consolidating the features of *any and all* prison worlds. But the construction of this model carries with it two major obstacles.

The first of these may be called the *problem of containment*. This “problem” pertains to the branching out of the prison into the external world, and how in-prison processes oftentimes reflect processes of the outside (and vice versa). As the context and interface approaches demonstrate, the central premise of contemporary prison ethnography is that the prison is never “autarchic,” “authoritarian,” “closed,” “self-contained,” or “self-sufficient,” but always exceeds its “local margin of discretion” and pours out into mainstream society, with regards to living conditions, standards, and the “goods, services, and communications [...] that flow through prisons” (ibid. 222, 224, 227). For instance, in twelfth-century England many prisoners were dependent on Christian charity — on the alms, bequests, endowments, donations, services, visits, wills, and general goods and services of confraternities, hospitals, and religious orders — for their very survival (Peters 1995: 26, 35). Regarding communications, out of plantation prisons

emerged “an astonishing contribution to American and world culture” via the “metamorphosis of slave songs into prison work songs and blues, which then became the tap root of later blues, jazz, and rock, as well as a prime source of modern prison literature” (Franklin 1998a: 7-8, 12). Such communications — especially at the time of the movement — were signs of a “dialectic between the consciousness emerging inside the prison and the forces at work in the larger society” (ibid.). And prison conditions and standards have long been a source of debate, visible in the tension between the principles of *normalization* and *less eligibility*¹² (Cunha 2014: 221-222).

There are many more examples of the dialectic between prison and the outside world: Fowler has pointed out that the system of criminal justice and prison policy are always intertwined with those of media portrayals, politics, and public opinion (2015: 376). And Wicker has noted that the de-emphasis on rehabilitation in the security society also entailed the cutting of educational opportunities in prisons, such as when New York State “abolished its twenty-year-old program of financial support for twenty-three colleges that had offered opportunities for higher education to inmates in forty-five state prisons¹³” (1998: xiii). Defining the prison world in terms of its closed and isolated nature (its separation from its surroundings) thus runs countercurrent to contemporary prison studies. The problem of containment may be theoretically “solved” by acknowledging that prisons and their internal worlds are necessarily embedded in a variety of contexts and interfaced junctures, but for analytical and heuristic purposes — as in the construction of their model — they can and will be taken as a bounded formations.

1.2.2. On Heterogeneity

The second obstacle or problem that concerns the construction of the prison world model is one of *heterogeneity*. Again, how can the universality of an abstract generalisation be invoked when

¹² In Europe, normalization (understood in a non-Foucauldian sense) ‘refers to the prison as one among many institutions that provide a public service and as a “normal” subsystem of society’ while less eligibility “inversely advocates the permanence of prisons below mainstream society standards in order to remain aversive and deterrent”; in normalization, prisons should “aim to reduce the gap between the inside and outside worlds and to mirror free society in central aspects of human existence (from civic to sexual aspects)” (Cunha 2014: 221-222).

¹³ Wicker further specified that the ‘approximately 3,500 “criminals” who had annually taken advantage of these opportunities later composed a recidivism rate of 26 percent against 48 percent for inmates in general’ (1998: xii).

speaking of formations which may differ one from the other in radical manners, both diachronically as well as synchronically? First, one must decide what “the” — or “a” — prison actually *is*. As seen, Irwin noted that the Big House was — and possibly still is — the *archetype* of the prison as such: the authoritarian source of all illusions and images concerning the prison, or the classic, most obvious idea that people (including sociologists) have *of* the prison (in Gillespie 2003: 36-37). But prisons exist in many non-archetypal sorts. Therefore, is it truly possible to construct a model that subsumes formations and their internal worlds as varied as the Roman *latumiae* (“quarry-prisons”), the Tower of London, and a plantation penitentiary?

Already one encounters difficulties in defining the prison as a *place of imprisonment*, if imprisonment is defined as “the public imposition of involuntary physical confinement” (Peters 1995: 3). Firstly, prisons need not necessarily be public. For instance, the first written laws of ancient Rome, the Twelve Tables — as well as other sources — emphasised the *private* nature of imprisonment in the Roman Republic (ibid. 15):

“The only instance of imprisonment in the Twelve Tables occurs in the laws concerning debt. Debtors who could or would not pay were to be held in private confinement by their creditors for sixty days and were to have their debts publicly announced on three successive market days, on the last of which they might be executed or sold into slavery outside the city. Narrative sources add one further category of imprisonment. The limitless powers of the male heads of Roman households included the right to maintain a domestic prison cell to discipline members of the household. This cell, the ergastulum, could be a work cell for recalcitrant slaves or a place of confinement at the pleasure of the father for any family member for any infraction of household discipline.”

Secondly, prisons also need not necessarily be involuntary. In sixth-century Frankish Gaul, for instance, St. Hospitius voluntarily chose to live chained inside of a tower with sealed entrances for the purpose of penance (ibid. 23-24). Similarly, in 1913 the prison reformer Thomas Mott Osborne spent a week in Auburn penitentiary to “find out what prison was really like” before becoming chairman of the New York State Prison Reform Commission (Franklin 1998b: 57).

Another problem connected to heterogeneity — as well as containment, for that matter — is that prisons can be just one aspect of a larger formation. The *hnrt wr* (“Great Prison”) of ancient Egypt, for instance, was a prison which also housed the Egyptian criminal courts (Peters 1995: 9-10). A similar situation held in the Roman Republic, where the *latumiae* “stood at the

northwest corner of the Roman forum, in an area known as the *Comitium*, the seat of the magistrates and the site of much of their judicial business” because these prisons were “probably [...] a convenient place of confinement close to the courts” (ibid. 19). One could also think of Alcatraz Island: if the latter as a whole is taken as the prison — with the surrounding water taken as analogous to the walls of a prison proper — then the line between the actual federal penitentiary and the island’s residential area becomes blurred.

1.2.3. On Prisons *Ex Nihilo*, Adapted, Exapted, and Museumified Prisons

The problem of prison heterogeneity has more considerations. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries — after the age of the birth of the prison and new developments occurring within — prisons began to specialise: prisons for juveniles, for the mentally ill, for women, with different security levels (minimum through to maximum-maximum), etc. (Morris and Rothman 1995: vii). That is, this age entailed the building of many prisons *ex nihilo* for the specific purpose of imprisonment. And historically, this — the systematic building of architectural formations meant to function as prisons — was nothing new. For example, in medieval England — following the Norman conquest and the centralisation of royal authority by Henry II in the twelfth century — a vast prison-building program was initiated in England, with county sheriffs and entire towns ordered to build themselves jails and prisons (Peters 1995: 34-35). Henry II also ordered the construction of a handful of royal prisons (including the Tower of London), a situation mirrored three centuries later when the number of royal prisons in France began to increase under the reign of Louis XI (ibid. 33-34, 40). In the Christian context, the construction of prisons *ex nihilo* became commonplace following the church’s revival of the ancient Roman inquisitorial procedure in the early thirteenth century (ibid. 30-31). From the mid-thirteenth century onwards the capacity of existing prisons was greatly strained by the inquisitorial courts, leading to the extensive construction of special inquisitorial prisons, notably in France and Sicily (ibid. 31).

The notion of prisons that came “out of nothing” can only be understood in relation to prisons which came about *ex materia*, or which came about — to borrow terms from biology — from *adaptation* and/or *exaptation*. For Thomas A. Sebeok, both of these concepts represent a tension between “historical genesis and current utility” (1991: 56). In adaptation a pre-existing

organism evolves a trait — a (morphological) structure and/or a (behavioural) function — for a specific purpose (role or usage), in order to give it a better chance of survival within its environment. In exaptation, a pre-existing trait (of an already pre-existing organism) is co-opted for a *different* purpose, also in order to better facilitate survival. Therefore, the current use or purpose of a trait does not necessarily infer an inkling of its origins (ibid.).

These terms can be transferred over from biological organisms and applied to prisons as such. An example of *adapted* prisons occurs in fifteenth-century France, when Louis XI not only ordered the building of various royal prisons “from scratch,” but also expanded various chateaux and fortresses by adding dungeons and towers to them in order to transform them into prisons, including the Bastille (which was “originally a gate in the fortifications constructed for the military defense of Paris”) (Peters 1995: 40). In these cases, pre-existing buildings “evolved” new traits beneficial to their survival, ones befitting their (metaphorical) environment (of, say, criminal justice). These new adaptations also possess a clear historical genesis (origin).

There are myriad examples of *exapted* prisons. For instance, by the fourth century the Roman *ergastulum* had also made its way into Christian monasteries and nunneries: “[D]elinquent monks and nuns [began to be] separated from their fellows and confined in an *ergastulum*, a disciplinary cell within the monastery in which forced labor took place, thus moving the old Roman punitive domestic work cell for slaves and household dependents into the institutional setting of the monastery” (ibid. 28). In this case, a pre-existing part of the monastery building (a room) with an already pre-existing trait — in all likelihood this room served a predetermined purpose, perhaps for a traditional monastic practice such as prayer — had now been co-opted for use as a prison cell. That the monastic *ergastulum* was a cell exapted for the purpose of imprisonment is visible in the ambiguity of terminology used to refer intra-monastic imprisonment: while some sources used the Latin term *carcer* (“prison”), others preferred the word *murus* (“wall”) — including *murus strictus* (“close confinement”) and *murus largus* (“more liberal confinement”) — with the latter terms coming ‘to be used as a designation for the room “appropriate for punishment” ’ required and imposed unilaterally by various religious authorities (ibid. 28-29). That this “room appropriate for punishment” was at times explicitly called a prison and at other times not illustrates an ambiguity present at the preliminary stage of exaptation.

However, by the late twelfth century canon law became systematised and thus homogenised Latin monasteries, with each expecting to hold a prison of one kind or another (ibid.). Moreover, every bishop was expected to have their own diocesan prison to hold criminal clergy (ibid. 29). That is: other than exaptation, monastic and/or non-inquisitorial imprisonment in the context of Christianity *also* became reliant on prisons *ex nihilo* (the construction of new diocesan prisons), as well as adapted prisons (the built-additions of prisons or prison cells *to* monasteries as such). By the late thirteenth century, the *poena carceris* (“punishment of prison”) was officially formulated by Pope Boniface VIII, which regularised imprisonment as a type of punishment and the prison as a place of confinement, thus permitting abbots and bishops to punish offenders — both clerical (including monks as well as secular clergy) and lay (including kings and nobles as well as commoners) — by either short or lifelong prison terms (ibid. 29-30). The thirteenth century also birthed what could be called a more specific version of the *poena carceris*, the punishment called *detrusio in monasterium* (“confinement in a monastery”) (ibid.). The latter could entail — for both clergy as well as the laity — “either living as a monk under normal monastic discipline or being held in a monastic prison” (ibid.). In the former case — if the entire monastery has now taken on the function of a prison — it could be said that the entire monastery itself has become exapted for the purpose of imprisonment¹⁴.

The latter type of exaptation is not unique: Frankish kings in Gaul also used monasteries in general as prisons to hold captured rebels (ibid. 24). Another example of exapted prisons occurred in proto-modern Sicily, where, “as elsewhere in Italy, public authorities used as prisons whatever suitable space was available for the purpose”; and even in early medieval times, the Castel San Angelo — tomb of the second-century Roman emperor Hadrian — was known as “The Prison of Theoderic” because of its usage as such by the Ostrogothic king (ibid. 42-43). Medieval England and Germany even birthed the concept of *ad hoc* or *makeshift* prisons, examples of exapted prisons *par excellence*: “prisons in German lands consisted of rooms and holes in the foundations of local fortifications, in the cellars of town halls, [...] in subterranean chambers [and in] gate[s] [and] bridge tower[s],” while in England nobles “who had more

¹⁴ The *detrusio in monasterium* is, again, also a problem of containment: what can be said to belong to the prison, and what not?

limited rights of justice also kept prisons, ranging from suites of rooms in the gatehouses of monasteries to castles, mills, and parts of houses” (ibid. 37, 35). Meanwhile in ancient Egypt “Pharaoh’s prison in Genesis appears to have been a granary that housed foreign offenders, who performed forced labor while in confinement” (such as Jacob), in Assyria “prisons were close to or inside granaries” and “[s]ome prisoners were confined in dry cisterns that were otherwise used for the storage of grain,” and the Romans exapted former quarries for the purpose of imprisonment (ibid. 9-10, 19). The Old Testament also recounted that the prophet Jeremiah was imprisoned in all of the house of a scribe, a gate, a guardhouse court attached to the royal palace, and a water cistern (ibid. 13). Once more, pre-existing formations — whether cellars, cisterns, granaries, monasteries, quarries, rooms, tombs, etc. — with already pre-existing traits have been given a new utility, co-opted for the purpose of imprisonment.

Whether originating *ex nihilo*, being adapted, or being exapted, there is one more consideration pertaining to the phylogeny of prisons. Namely, these processes may also work in reverse: prisons can fall apart or be destroyed (as is the case with Patarei prison in contemporary Tallinn), or prisons as such may themselves be adapted or exapted for other purposes: “The prisons of the ancient world have disappeared. Those of late antiquity and medieval Europe have fallen into ruin, have been recycled into other uses, or have been preserved as museums” (ibid. 3). Alcatraz and Patarei (pre-disintegration) are examples of prisons having been “museumified,” as is the Castel San Angelo, whose *prigione storiche* (“historical prisons”) have become a popular tourist attraction (ibid. 43). No matter the case, prisons *ex nihilo*, adapted prisons, exapted prisons, and museumified¹⁵ prisons all contribute to the problems of both heterogeneity as well containment, and thus to the problem of defining the prison world.

¹⁵ “Museumification” shall be given an ad hoc definition referring — both retroactively and as follows — to the general “reverse” processes by which prisons themselves become destroyed, are adapted, or are exapted. A follow-up question now concerns the *conscious* nature of these processes: destruction can be planned (by engineers or politicians, for example), but can also just “happen” (as in the disintegration of Patarei); adaptations can be planned, but can also just “happen” (as in a hypothetical scenario where moss or other natural phenomena grow on prison ruins and add new features that allow life to flourish on and within these ruins); finally, exaptations can also be planned, but they may also just “happen” (as in a hypothetical situation where animals take a pre-existing feature of a ruined prison, one with a pre-existing trait — a ceiling, a guard tower, etc. — and use it in a new way: as a burrow, as a nest, as a hiding place, and so on).

1.2.4. On Family Resemblance

While the “problem” of containment was theoretically “solved,” that of heterogeneity is still open-ended. The most troubling issue is that the criteria which determine what *is* a prison and what *is not* a prison is highly variable: current utility, origin, public nature, involuntary nature, approximation to an archetype (perhaps in terms of something like appearance), etc. For example, Morris and Rothman posited concentration camps as outside the history of the prison, because of their “design and horror” (in other words, something about their “style”): “The genocidal practices that went on within the camps did not take their inspiration from the conduct of criminal punishment; however gross the violations to dignity and decency within the prison, they do not match up to the Nazi experience” (1995: xiii-xiv). They also noted that “the English prison of 1790 or the American prison of 1830 had little in common with the prisons of 1900 or 1990,” regardless of whether the “yardstick” (criterion) is “the daily routine, the amount of time served, the methods of release, or [...] the public’s understanding of the purposes of confinement” (ibid. vii). Furthermore, Peters has noted that the “varied history” of ancient prisons is “usually explained only in terms of modern concepts of penology,” citing the Old Testament as an example (1995: 3, 13):

‘The conventions of biblical translation require that the text of the Bible be rendered in such a way that it is understandable to contemporary readers. But in the case of imprisonment, such translation rules prove to be misleading. The description of the places and uses of imprisonment [...] suggests a far greater variety of types of confinement than what the simple modern terms “prison” and “stocks” can adequately convey.’

The “solution” to the problem of heterogeneity perhaps lies in positing prisons in terms of what Ludwig Wittgenstein called *family resemblance*. Mark Haugaard described it thusly (2010: 424):

“Wittgenstein developed the concept of family resemblance concepts to denote concepts that overlap in usage while there is no single essence that unites all these usages. The actual example of family resemblance concepts that Wittgenstein used was the word ‘game’. One might, for instance, select winning and losing as the essence of the word ‘game’. However, if one were to observe a solitary child bouncing a ball against a wall, that could constitute a valid use of the word ‘game’, which involves neither winning nor losing[.] The word ‘game’ is like the members of a family in which there are many overlapping characteristics without a single one being common to all: John has his father’s hair and his mother’s nose, while his sister has her father’s long hands, and so on.”

All different prisons or prison worlds may thus be understood as members of a family which resemble one another more or less according to different characteristics. The question then becomes: “What *are* these characteristics (what are the prison’s — or more specifically, the prison worlds’s — analogues to hair, hands, nose, etc.)?” The construction of the prison world model offers an answer to this question by elucidating the various components that compose the prison world and which thus determine familial relations, and is able to mitigate the problem of heterogeneity by celebrating the differences in prison worlds and positing that there is not necessarily an “essence” proper to them all.

Of course, this “solution” is as conditional as the solution to the problem of containment. And the problem of heterogeneity further complexifies when dealing with what Erving Goffman called the *total institution*, places which share many features in common with prisons, especially Big Houses: institutions of care (asylums/mental hospitals, orphanages, retirement homes), of cloisters (abbeys, convents, monasteries), of quarantine (leprosaria), of work (army barracks, boarding schools, merchant ships), and of those considered dangerous (jails, concentration camps, prisoner of war camps, the prison in general) (in Gillespie 2003: 37-38; and Steinberg 2004: 57-58). The heterogeneity of prison worlds also faces one more consideration: *metaphor*. With roots in ancient Greek and Hebrew philosophy and religion, the idea of the prison was often extended: the body as a prison for the soul, the cosmos as prison for human beings, etc. (Peters 1995: 8, 13-14). These metaphorical extensions shall not be considered prison worlds in the context of this work. The case of non-prison type total institutions is more ambiguous: inasmuch as they are distinguishable from prisons proper they shall also not be considered prison worlds in the context of this thesis, though the argument could in many cases also be made for considering them as prison worlds.

1.3. On Models

1.3.1. On the Definition of Model and Types of Models: Artistic, Scientific, Play, and Play-Type

Sebeok (1991) reconfigured the traditional Tartu-Moscow conception of the *modelling system* — defined by Lotman as “a structure of elements and rules of their combination, existing in a state

of fixed analogy to the whole sphere of the object of perception, cognition, or organization” (2011: 250) — by positing the Umwelt (the zoosemiotic nonverbal) as the *primary* modelling system, thus “bumping” natural language (the anthroposemiotic verbal) up to the secondary level, and all other creative, cultural, or human superstructures up to the tertiary level¹⁶. In this context, Sebeok defined the *model* as an iconic sign or “reductive analogy” (1991: 50). Lotman also noted that only icons “can be equated to models,” and offered his own definition of the model: “an analogue of an object of perception that substitutes it in the process of perception” (2011: 250-251). Models substitute their objects productively during perception (ibid. 251), relating to them via an “effective similarity” (Sebeok 1991: 51). Self-evidently, model and object are never identical: a map is never taken for the terrain it represents (Lotman 2011: 252).

On what may now be seen as the tertiary level, Lotman distinguishes between different sorts of models, specifically *play* models as opposed to *scientific* models¹⁷ (ibid.). Scientific models are rooted in conventional behaviour — such as reading a map — and thus organise the intellect, while play models are rooted in the simultaneous realisation of both conventional and everyday-practical behaviour (such as walking the terrain), and thus organise activity (ibid. 252, 268-269). Because play is both “practical and factitious” it is also the underlying “mechanism” or “principle” of *artistic* models, though play and art are not identical: while the goal of play is to train for situations, art aims to approximate the “truth” of life; art is not play, but a *play-type* model (ibid. 255, 260-261, 264-265). Furthermore, because art organises both activity and intellect, it is a combination of the models of both play and science (ibid. 268-269).

1.3.2. On Fiction

Lotman sees reality as an object of non-discrete *parole*, with “our concept of the object” a “theoretical model” or discrete *langue* used to conceptualise it (ibid. 267). This model of reality

¹⁶ Importantly, while Sebeok viewed modelling systems as being evolutionarily ordered and hierarchically structured — both onto- as well phylogenetically (1991: 55) — the Tartu-Moscow school made no such claims.

¹⁷ These models are also referred to by Lotman (2011) as “logical-cognitive,” “logico-scientific,” and “scientific-cognitive,” models.

could theoretically be posited on both and/or either of the Sebeokian levels of Umwelt and/or natural language. But on Sebeok's tertiary level — the secondary level in classic Tartu-Moscow writings — Lotman posits a very special place for art: it is only art which has the ability to become a new *parole* (therefore, a new non-discrete reality) in relation to a person's theoretical conception of reality, *as well as* a new *langue* which allows for the re-interpretation of reality "in the light of prior artistic experience" (ibid.). This is a role Lotman does not allow for science.

But such a claim is objectionable. Clifford Geertz, for instance, contrasted his semiotic or symbolic anthropology — based on the use of *interpretations* — with sciences such as biology or physics (1973: 24, 14). For Geertz, the aim of anthropology is to figure out "what the devil is going on" with regards to human cultures, making it a science aiming to interpret — or *model* — human reality as such (ibid. 16). In such science, every finished product or work— being interpretation-based — is never just a transparent observation, but necessarily a metalevel *construct*: "In finished anthropological writings [...] what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions" (ibid. 9). And as a construct, every work of anthropology is also therefore a *fiction* — something "fashioned" or imagined or "made" — on the same level as, for instance, a piece of literature¹⁸ (ibid. 15-16). The anthropologist is thus an active critic, rather than a passive decoder (ibid. 9). Geertz took pains to point out that — though fictional — anthropological works are not 'false, unfactual, or merely "as if" thought experiments,' but also possess explanatory insight and scientific value (ibid. 15).

Geertz also pointed out that a work is called "anthropological because it is, in fact, anthropologists who profess them," and that the map is not equivalent to the terrain: "[it is usually] not necessary to point out quite so laboriously that the object of study is one thing and the study of it is another," but that in cultural analysis the line between culture "as a natural fact" and "as a theoretical entity" often gets blurred (ibid.). Moreover, while "culture exists in the trading post, the hill fort, or the sheep run, anthropology exists in the book, the article, the lecture, the museum display, or [...] the film" (ibid. 16). The consequence of this is that "the line between mode of representation and substantive content is as undrawable in cultural analysis as it is in painting," a situation which threatens the "objective status of anthropological knowledge

¹⁸ Though Geertz did note the obvious difference between anthropological notation and literary creation.

by suggesting that its source is not social reality but scholarly artifice,” thus making of it a “soft” science (but a science nonetheless) (ibid.).

Contrasting “soft” interpretive science with “hard” science can be misleading. For instance, Lotman offered an expansion of Geertz’s understanding when he notes that a scientific model is the “model of an abstract idea” but also the “interpretation of a general law” (2011: 261). Interpretation is thus posited within the hard sciences as well. In such a situation, *all* models — from art to science (both “hard” and “soft”) — can be seen as constructed fictions. And in such a situation, it is unclear why scientific models — on the tertiary level — could not function as new *langues* in relation to reality. And indeed, Paul Ricoeur allowed for this possibility with his ideas concerning the “ontology” of fiction, and the concept of *productive reference*¹⁹, wherein fiction has the function of *adding to* reality, of both discovering and inventing it, of augmenting or increasing it, of making and remaking it, of *changing* it, of producing, promoting, redescribing, reorganising, and *shaping* it as such (1979).

For Ricoeur, fiction’s reality-shaping function is present in both aesthetics (the arts) *and* science, nullifying the dichotomy between the poetic and the epistemologic imagination (much like Geertz nullified the distinction between a painting and a work of cultural analysis): the creativity of artistic works (models) stands on equal footing with a “conceptual field of scientific knowledge” littered with “analogies, models, and paradigms” (ibid. 140). Indeed, Ricoeur posited all types of models — as well as their explanatory functions — as central to productive reference; for him, scientific models may also become “a second sort of language aris[ing] to redescribe the world” (139, 141):

“To the extent that models are not models of... i.e., still pictures of a given reality, but models for..., i.e., heuristic fictions for redescribing reality, the work of the model becomes in turn a model for construing in a meaningful way the concept of the productive reference of all fictions, including the so-called poetic fictions.”

Both artistic and scientific models now stand on equal footing in terms of their ability to shape reality. But Ricoeur stressed that reality-shaping does not only occur on the level of cognition or theory, but also at the level of praxes (“practical fictions”) which reorganise the world, concrete

¹⁹ Which he also calls *iconic augmentation* (Ricoeur 1979: 128).

examples being ideology and utopia (ibid. 123, 141). This idea is similar to Lotman's, but expanded to also include scientific and not just artistic models.

1.3.3. On Constructing a Scientific Model of the Prison World

The above is not to say that artistic and scientific models exist in a relation of total equivalence; like Geertz and Lotman noted in different ways, there is a clear distinction between the two. Rather, the notion of fictionality posits the idea that art and science — as existents in the world — are posted on the same “plane” and thus have the ability to say something about the world, or to influence reality as such. And this idea is of course related to the choice of research materials present in this thesis, which range from the scientific to the literary-artistic. This idea is also related to this work's methodology, or its production on the basis of non-empirical research.

The aim of this work is to construct the scientific model of a general prison world, one whose mode of representation will take the form of a diagram and verbal description of components. An exemplary scientific model “is unambiguous, [this being] the source of its value” (Lotman 2011: 261). Scientific models possess a variety of features which distinguish them from play-type models (ibid. 250, 252, 256-257, 266-267):

Scientific Models:	Play-type Models:
Rooted in cognitive, conventional behaviour.	Rooted in both conventional and practical behaviour.
Usually follow conscious rules of construction.	Usually follow intuitive rules of construction.
Derive from hypotheses of already-comprehended realities.	Create hypotheses pertaining to uncomprehended realities.
Better suited for modelling a phenomenon's <i>langue</i> .	Better suited for modelling a phenomenon's <i>parole</i> .
Follow deterministic laws.	Follow probabilistic laws.
Generally adhere to the antithesis “true—false.”	Generally adhere to the antithesis “richer—poorer.”
Organise the intellect.	Organise activity, or both the intellect <i>and</i> activity.

The model of the prison world will adhere to most of these criteria. First, this model will be rooted in cognitive behaviour and never be conflated for the actual terrain of the many heterogeneous prison worlds. Second, its formulation will follow conscious rules of construction (for instance, in the definitions of specific terms, or in the placing of the components in the

diagram). Third, it will be derived from a reality already hypothesised. Fourth, it will reconstruct the *langue* — the “inner nature” or the “system” — of the prison world, rather than its *parole* (a.k.a the domain of “randomness, incomplete determination, [or] the probability of processes and phenomena”) (ibid. 256, 266). And fifth, being a deterministic model it will eliminate any random relations of meaning pertaining to the actual model itself as accidental, thus decreasing probabilistic combinations — the arbitrary relations, equivocality, flexibility, or multi-layered semantics, of elements and/or levels within the entire structure itself — in favour of the univocality (lack of ambiguity) ideal for a scientific treatise (ibid. 250, 258, 261, 265-268). An example of this would be that an unintentional diagrammatic and/or verbal feature such as alliteration in the names of associated components shall be considered inconsequential.

1.3.4. On Scientific Impurity: Anticipation, Appraisal, Clinical Inference

Though aiming to be scientific, the prison world model must also be understood in terms of “impurities” which make it more akin to play-type models. First, this model can only be judged according to the antithesis of “richer—poorer” (and *not* “true—false”). That is — on the basis of two distinctions made by Geertz — this model only adheres to the principles of *anticipation* as opposed to prediction, and *appraisal* as opposed to verification (1973: 16, 26).

That this model anticipates as opposed to predicts means that though it reconstructs the *langue* of the prison world, it cannot project or “deduc[e] future states of a determined system,” only help to understand phenomena post facto (ibid. 26). Or in Lotman’s terms, the “performed” *parole* of a prison world — the actual material expression or unique incarnation of its *langue* — can never be exactly predicted by the model of its *langue*-system (see 2011: 256, 265-266).

That this model may only be appraised as opposed to verified means that it can never be judged in terms of its veracity or falsehood, but only in terms of being able to “clarify,” “reduce [...] puzzlement,” or “tell a better account from a worse one” (Geertz 1973: 16). In Lotman’s binary, the prison world model in relation to specific prison worlds can thus only be valued in terms of its “richness” — its ability to clarify the non-univocal and reduce mystery in a “better” (“richer”) or “worse” (“poorer”) manner — and never verified in terms of being an exact “truth” or one-to-one correspondence of model (map) to actual prison world (terrain).

In short, the prison world model — because it can only anticipate, and be appraised — can never be judged according to the digital (either/or) antithesis “true—false,” but only according to the analog (more or less) antithesis “richer—poorer.”

This model is also scientifically impure because it organises both the intellect *as well as* activity. Like all models, the prison world model is necessarily a fiction possessing productive reference and thus the ability to (re)shape reality, both in terms of theory *and* praxis. But the way in which it does so is unique, and is what differentiates it from, say, models of biology or physics. This situation is understandable via another distinction made by Geertz, between a *General Theory* and a *clinically-inferential theory* (ibid. 24-28).

For Geertz, what differentiated a biological observation or a physical experiment from a (cultural) interpretation is that while on the basis of the formers it is possible to formulate abstractions separable from the actual case studies, on the basis of the latter such a formulation is nigh impossible (ibid. 24-25). That is, an interpretation becomes “[i]mprisoned in the immediacy of its own detail” with its theoretical formulations “hover[ing] so low over the interpretations they govern that they don’t make much sense [...] apart from them” (ibid.). Instead of a General Theory characteristic of biology or physics — a generalisation *across* multiple cases — interpretations generalise *within* cases, thus forming clinically-inferential theories (ibid. 26).

Geertz’s analogy is with medicine: though theories (concepts, hypotheses) and previous discoveries (studies, works) mobilise certain lines of thought, the specificity of the particular case — its uniquely individual “symptoms” — necessarily determines its “diagnosis” and subsequent “treatment,” this being clinical inference as such (ibid. 25-26). More generally, interpretation-based analyses are not a set of cumulative findings, but a “coherent sequence of bolder and bolder sorties” that run side by side and “plunge more deeply into the same things,” attempting to be “more incisive” than the previous: “Every serious cultural analysis starts from a sheer beginning and ends where it manages to get before exhausting its intellectual impulse” (ibid. 26). Clinically-inferential theories are the conclusions drawn on the basis of a single case study: generalisations made in one specific context where “the delicacy of [...] distinctions” override “the sweep of [...] abstractions,” with these abstractions seeming “commonplace or vacant” when looked at independently of the context as such (ibid. 24-25). As

opposed to a General Theory, a clinically-inferential theory is “insinuated” and not explicitly articulated or systematised (ibid.).

The prison world model is constructed on the basis of interpretations. Though it reconstructs the *langue* of the prison world and thus aims at a General Theory of the prison world, because it is neither predictive nor verifiable means that the prison world model as such derives its primary value in the context of specific cases of clinical inference. That is, due to the heterogeneity of prison worlds — and the fact that the prison world model is a composite that never corresponds exactly to any one specific prison world — this model must provide a set of conceptual coordinates or theoretical orientations with actual relevance for the analysis of specific prison worlds, in order to have any value whatsoever.

In short, this model must support unique case studies (“sorties”) and be able to anticipate mutations of the prison world, and thereafter be appraised in terms of how well it accomplished this. This model must always be judged on how well it balances its own static nature with the dynamism inherent to the terrain it is modelling. It must be constructive and productive in specific cases, rather than not; though directed towards “generating interpretations of matters already in hand,” the prison world model does not only have to fit “realities past,” but also “intellectually survive [...] realities to come” (see ibid. 25-26, 27).

These considerations have profound significance for a field such as prison ethnography. Instead of merely organising the intellect of academics, the prison world model may also organise the activity of an ethnographer studying in an actual prison. Though conventional, *when mobilised in a specific setting* the prison world model may also bleed into the ethnographer’s practical behaviour, orienting them and allowing them to diagnose the specific symptoms of the prison world they are invested in. The use of this model in clinical inference engages both behavioural types (and thus both intellect and activity), meaning that — when used in “field research” or “observational studies” done in the prison (Cunha 2014: 216) — the prison world model shares features with play-type models. This makes of prison ethnography a sort of “play” wherein map and terrain — model and object, theory and praxis, etc. — are in a dialectic relation. Indeed, the same situation is conceivable in ethnography or sociology with regards to the models already examined: deprivation, importation, or integration.

As somewhat of an aside — and beyond the scope of this work — this sub-section will conclude by pointing out that a synthesis of ideas found in Geertz’s semiotic anthropology, Lotman’s writings about models, modelling activity (“human activity in creating models”), and modelling systems (2011: 250), Ricoeur’s theory of the imagination (rooted in the human capacity for metaphor found at the level of natural language), and Sebeok’s theory of modelling systems, would be very fruitful.

1.3.5. On the Utility of the Prison World Model

These comments pertain to the general *utility* of the prison world model: its actual usefulness, applicability, practical worth, etc. On the most general level, this model is a contribution to the “enlargement of the universe of human discourse” or the “consultable record of what man has said,” with side contributions including “instruction, amusement, practical counsel, moral advance, and the discovery of natural order in human behavior” (Geertz 1973: 14, 30). More specifically, there are three main ways — each of which shall be described in the second part of this thesis — that the prison world model may possess utility and carry real-world consequences: its usefulness in doing *analyses* of specific prison worlds (where it functions as the aforementioned theoretical aide orienting the researcher in their study of an individual prison), in describing the process as well as the consequences of what is known as *prisonization*, and in constructing a *typology* — or *typologies* — of prison worlds.

1.3.6. On Orders of Models, Thick Description, and the Semiotics of the Prison

As noted, the prison world model is a fiction constructed on the basis of interpretation(s). The question then becomes: “What *sort* of interpretation is the prison world model?” Geertz wrote of *orders of interpretation*: a *first order* interpretation is an understanding of the world peculiar to the *native* in his own culture, for example (1973: 15). Geertz did not refer to first order interpretation in terms of modelling, but does use the term *native model* to refer to *second order* interpretations wherein informants are self-reflective and “trained on the culture” of which they themselves are a part (ibid. 14-15). It is also on the level of the second order that all of anthropology is situated, where anthropological works as descriptive fictions are constructed on

the basis of interpretations of informant behaviour (ibid. 15). And anthropological works based on other such works reach levels of *third order* interpretation or even higher (ibid.).

In the context of this work, orders of interpretation could be reformulated as *orders of models*. Furthermore, in taking Sebeok's view — where the Umwelt is the primary model of all organic beings, this model being “a semiotic production with [...] rules for biological and logical operations” (1991: 57) — what Geertz calls a first order interpretation (model) would actually be a second order one (and a second order model would be “bumped up” to a third order model, and so on). These considerations have relevance for the construction of the prison world model. The latter is necessarily a construction, fiction, interpretation, and is — *at best*, and in the Sebeokian tradition — a *fourth order* model, in some instances even higher. The orders would shake down as follows: Umwelt (first order), “native” in his own culture (second order), ethnographic and other works (third order), prison world model constructed on the basis of the latter (fourth order).

That the prison world model exists — at best — on the Sebeokian fourth order means that this model is, again, *not* constructed on the basis of empirical or ethnographic research done by the author. Instead, it is constructed on the basis of close readings of *other* (written, verbal) models, themselves *at least* third order models. And, again, these models — as research materials — come in various styles, ranging from the scientific (academic, anthropological, etc.) to the literary artistic. The level of the third order also includes the “native models” of prisoners, what could be called *prisoner models*. For instance, in the introduction to his anthology book of American prison literature, Franklin wrote (1998a: 1):

“Each selection in this volume is about prison experience. Imposing this limitation eliminated the majority of works by American convicts and actually excluded those convict authors who chose not to write about prison. [...] But this limitation also focuses the collection into a vision of America from the bottom, an anatomy of the American prison, and an exploration of the meanings of imprisonment.”

These models of “native prisoners” — which illuminate “the meanings of imprisonment” — exist on the same plane as those of prison ethnographers. For Geertz, ethnography was a kind of

“doing” central to anthropology, classically conceived of as fieldwork²⁰ (1973: 6). But for Geertz himself, ethnography was more than fieldwork or “automatized routines of data collection,” instead being a “kind of intellectual effort [or] elaborate venture” known as *thick description* (ibid. 6-10). The latter is the inscription — the writing down or “fixing” — of an anthropological phenomenon, a process of constant contextualisation wherein an object is unrelentingly described in terms of its infinite details and embeddedness within a field of interminable semiotic webs, in order to capture it for future consultation, a process which can never be exhaustive²¹ (see ibid. 5-10, 19-20, 29). Thick-descriptive ethnography functions at the micro scale (at the level of “fine comb field studies”) and is always actor-oriented, rooted in what has been called “emic analysis”, “the verstehen approach,” or “participatory observation” (ibid. 14, 20-23).

Prison ethnography can thus be understood as ethnography of the prison world, with the prison ethnographer being the practitioner of thick description within. Cunha notes that prison ethnography is oftentimes more akin to *quasi-ethnography* than ethnography proper, because in a “closed [...] environment” the “issue of accessibility is paramount for the viability of in-depth, long-term ethnographic research,” and ethnography in general relies on informal, nonelicited, serendipitous, and unstructured data, not just data received from planned or scheduled inquiries; in prison worlds, however, access is always somewhat “filtered²²” (2014: 225).

Regardless, the relevance of these ideas is as follows. As a model — an analogy, construction, fiction, icon, or interpretation, of the fourth order or higher — the model of the prison world is also a *sign*; as Sebeok noted, the formula “there are things and models of things, the latter being also things but used in a special way” could easily be reformulated as “there are objects and signs of objects, the former also being signs but used in a special way” (1991: 51). Whether on the level of the human Umwelt, the native prisoner, of self-reflective prisoner

²⁰ Generally consisting of “establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary” or “interviewing informants, observing rituals, eliciting kin terms, tracing property lines, censusing households... writing [a] journal” (Geertz 1973: 6, 10).

²¹ Geertz also took pains to emphasise the fact that these phenomena are not purely symbolic, but always located in “material complexity,” the “hard surfaces of life,” or “biological and physical necessities” (1973: 20, 30).

²² Though Cunha did note that there have been a “nonnegligible” amount of prison ethnographies “which have benefited from full, unrestricted and unconditioned access to prisoners” and prisons, notably in Europe (2014: 225).

models (touching on the “meanings of imprisonment”) or prison research (such as thick-descriptive prison ethnography or prison sociology), or a higher metalevel (such as the one used in constructing the prison world model), one is necessarily dealing with models and thus with signs; one is thus necessarily working in the *semiotics of the prison*.

1.3.7. On Self-Reflexivity and Language Games

Prison ethnography offers more lessons for the construction of the prison world model. According to Cunha, prison ethnography would do well to emphasise reflexivity, or to become “more reflexively aware of the manifold conditions of its own production” (2014: 227-228). This self-reflexivity may take different shapes. For instance, prison ethnographers have challenged the “qualitative techniques” used in their research: autoethnography, life stories, and self-narratives, as well as classic ethnographic techniques such as interviewing (Cunha 2014: 225). They have also problematised the use of various categories of ethnographic analysis²³ (ibid. 225-227). Importantly, the practitioners of prison ethnography have also challenged their *situatedness* in relation to the prison world²⁴; central to this type of “identity management” is the researcher problematising their own “social location”: age, the Anglo-American tradition of prison research, class, gender, race or ethnicity, etc. (ibid. 225-226).

In constructing the prison world model, the author is situated at a non-empirical, higher-order metalevel, and uses the “technique” of close reading (of a variety of different sorts of writings). The categories used in constructing this model ignore context — seeing the prison world as bounded and closed — emphasising the category of *inside* as opposed to outside. And in terms of situatedness, though aiming to build a universal model applicable to all prison worlds, there is an American and Eurocentric bias detectable in terms of (historical) examples, as

²³ For example, Cunha pointed out that the “gender-bound” nature of female prison research — or the race/ethnicity category underemphasised in Portuguese prison research — have led to simplified, overly linear understandings of prisoners and specific prison worlds (2014: 226-227).

²⁴ In terms of “their overt or covert role as researcher,” “their actual or imputed position” (as guard, prisoner, social worker, student, visitor, etc.), their level of intimacy or detachment — in terms of intellectual and emotional engagement — with subjects, their role as insider or outsider (and how this affects rapport and level of acceptance), and the ways in which they navigate different prison groups and power structures (Cunha 2014: 225-226).

well as an emphasis on *male* prisons. Regarding these biases, this means that a system such as the Russian Gulag will be underemphasised, as will other members of the prison family: female prisons, juvenile prisons, and other specialised prisons.

Finally, the utility of the prison world model has one last consideration. Namely, this model — in specific works — may be applied according to two different *language games*, another term developed by Wittgenstein. According to Haugaard, language games are the contexts or modes that determine which member of a family resemblance concept/term is being used, and he himself distinguished between two types, what could be called *moral normative* as opposed to *analytic sociological* language games (2010). In the former context, family resemblance terms become appraisive and evaluative, while in the latter context these terms stay neutral and sortal (ibid. 421-424). When writing in the moral normative mode, the author is being prescriptive: they are impressing a vision of how things *ought* to be, are arguing for or against something (ibid.). In the analytic sociological mode the author is being descriptive: they are arguing about what something *is*, without any commendation or censure (ibid.).

An ethno-anthropological work using the prison world model may be written in either of these keys. For instance, Cunha pointed out that a work of prison ethnography may be either written in the style of *prison-centrism* — a work written “as an ideology endorsing prison itself” — or with “descriptive-ethnographic foci” in mind (2014: 218). The use of a particular language game may have real world causes. For instance, Cunha also pointed out that prison research comes in two types, depending on who is doing the *funding*: they may be agenda-driven and utilitarian, or “more autonomous and theoretically driven” (ibid. 225). These two types of works and two types of research conform more or less to Haugaard’s distinction between the two language games. Attempting to stay descriptive, the elucidation of the prison world model present in this thesis is rooted in the mode of the analytic sociological language game.

Part II: A Model of the Prison World

2.1. On the Individual and Prisonization

2.1.1. On Sub-Processes of Prisonization and Subcultural Assimilation

The sociologists of the classic era were not just concerned with defining the prisoner subculture, but also with understanding the “mechanism of socialization” into it, what Clemmer called *prisonization* (Gillespie 2003: 35). Prisonization was perhaps the most important concept to emerge from the core tradition of prisoner-subcultural research. While Sykes focused on argot roles and the inmate code, Clemmer focused on the social process of incarceration whereby new inmates joined the prisoner world (ibid. 44; Jacobs 1979: 2; Cunha 2014: 224). Clemmer’s original formulation posited prisonization as a more or less unconscious process — of accommodation, adaptation, adoption, “secondary socialization” — in which a person learns enough of the culture of the prison social unit to be characteristic of it, the “taking on in greater or less degree of the folkways, mores, customs, and general culture” of the prison’s “sociocultural sub-system” (in Gillespie 2003: 35, 44-45). Prisonization entails the acquisition of new habits — in dressing, eating, sleeping, working, etc. — and the new local language, as well as the recognition that the environment provides no means for supplying one’s needs (ibid. 45). Prisonization as such is an *enculturation* or *appropriation* (ibid. 44-45).

However, prisonization is more than just a net accumulation of prison facts; it is also an “untraining” that “strips inmates of prior identities” (ibid.). Here Gillespie connected prisonization with Goffman’s concept of *mortification* (of the self), pertaining to the process of socialisation into total institutions²⁵ (ibid.). More than just enculturation, prisonization is also a *disculturation* stripping all the prior influences and supports of back home — name, possessions, sense of safety, usual appearance, etc. — via different “[a]dmission procedures,” “degradation ceremonies,” and “obedience tests” (ibid. 45-46). Steinberg emphasised the *infantilisation* aspect of mortification: as agency is eroded, inmates are “robbed of the very basics of the adult world” (2004: 13). These basics include control over both overarching projects — careers,

²⁵ This is valid in the sense that the Big House is practically a total institution *par excellence* (Gillespie 2003: 37).

lifelong partnerships, raising children, etc. — as well as even the most simple minutiae of living (when to eat, rest, use the telephone, wash, etc.) (ibid.). Mortification is a systematic and often unintentional abasement or profanation, a humiliating, negative welcome which leads to the acceptance of a low status and inferior role (Gillespie 2003: 46).

Crucially, the earliest conception of prisonization — the one which has determined the orientation of the researchers using the concept, even up to contemporary authors such as Gillespie (2003) — posited it as an assimilation *directly into the prisoner subculture* (ibid. 46). Even in newer, more nuanced elaborations — where prisonization is understood as a mortification-based disculturation, followed by a new appropriation-based enculturation — the extent to which a person was prisonized was understood as being dependent on two different but related sub-processes. First, on the process of *loss*: how quickly a person was discultured and infantilised-mortified, so that “former perspectives [can be] invaded by the prison environment and the inmate subculture” (ibid.). Second, on the process of *gain*: how deeply a person accumulated knowledge about the prison’s social organisation and appropriated the inmate code (ibid.). In sum: “those inmates who experience the greatest disculturation are quite likely to immerse themselves in the inmate subculture” (get encultured to the greatest extent) (ibid.). That is: *prisonization and its processes are seen as inseparable from the inmate code and subculture*.

2.1.2. On Collective and Individual Responses

Prisonization always begets a *response*. As noted, Sykes’ view was that the deprivations caused by the pains of imprisonment either led inmates to absorb the inmate code, or enter into a personal all-out war against everyone. Hamm noted that in either case, responses may include aggression, conning, exploitation, fatalism, passivity, predation, or withdrawal (2007a: 5, 10). That is, both Hamm and Sykes do not differentiate between *individual* as opposed to *collective* responses. Meanwhile, Goffman himself described four consequences of prisonization²⁶ which disregarded the collective aspect, positing prisonization as the *private* response of individuals

²⁶ From hereon the term “prisonization” shall be used as an overarching term covering all the related aspects of appropriation, disculturation, enculturation, infantilisation, mortification, etc. Thus, when discussing, for example, Goffman’s ideas — which were posited explicitly for the concept of mortification of which he wrote about — the term “prisonization” shall be used instead, hopefully without distorting Goffman’s original thought.

meant to protect the sense of self, instead of public responses leading to group communication or morale (in Steinberg 2004: 14). These four consequences were: *situational withdrawal* (mental flight), *colonisation* (the rationalisation that confined life is better than outside life), *conversion* (an attempt at being the perfect inmate), and *intransigence* (total broadside against all authority) (ibid.). Moreover, inmates may combine several of these modes, whether diachronically or synchronically (ibid.). For Steinberg, the nuance of Goffman's thought was that while in normal life humans are able to distance themselves from unpleasant situations, in prisons "assault upon the self" is "collapsed into the situation": since the inmate cannot distance himself from the scenario, "the inmate's very response to [their prisonization] is symptomatic of [their prisonization]" (ibid.). Or put another way: since an inmate cannot escape their situation, how they react to it necessarily illuminates how they feel about that situation.

The understandings of prisonization found in Clemmer, Sykes, and Goffman may be put on a continuum. On one end sits Clemmer, who emphasised its collective aspect in the form of the prisoner subculture. In the middle sits Sykes, who commented on both its collective as well as individual aspects. And on the opposite end sits Goffman, who focused all his attention on the individual response. This is the reason Steinberg noted that prison gangs "may well have surprised Goffman" because they "display a degree of oppositional militancy and an enduring solidarity that he dismissed as impossible — by fiat, it should be said, rather than argument" (ibid. 15). Steinberg then contributes a Clemmerian understanding, stating that in "their most idealised self-representations" prison gangs "are a collective variant" of Goffman's intransigent line — one he did not envision — who "reject in toto the authority of the custodians and place a premium on inmate solidarity" (ibid.). But Steinberg also goes on to specify (ibid.):

"Nonetheless, it would be imprudent to discard Goffman's help in understanding [prison] gangs. He may not have imagined their existence²⁷, but the tools he crafted can certainly assist in making sense of them. True, the gangs

²⁷ Ironically, Clemmer would have also struggled with imagining the existence of prison gangs, but for a different reason. As the preeminent sociologist of the Big House, its social organisation in the pre-movement era led him to posit one single prisoner subculture. Of course, the "balkanized" gang subculture of the jungle prison which came to be in the 1950s problematised his conception. Coincidentally, Clemmer was also a prominent prison official: as head of the District of Columbia Department of Corrections, Clemmer was one of the most vehement persecutors of the Black Muslims, a.k.a. the instigators of the very same balkanisation that fractured his theory (Jacobs 1979: 7).

should never be conflated with the adjustments and adaptations of individuals — [...] many inmates' relation to their own gangs is acutely tactical and utilitarian. However, the gangs can certainly be understood as an institutional expression of a collective adaptation to [prisonization] — an adaptation laden with all the irony and pathos Goffman so masterfully captured; indeed, they should be understood so.”

From the above considerations, it follows that even so-called collective responses originate in the personal or private responses of individuals proper; a group of intransigents means that every individual of this group *is* an intransigent (or at least “tactical and utilitarian” enough to pretend to be). To speak of a “collective response” as such is thus misleading; the latter is in actuality a secondary phenomenon built overtop of individual responses.

2.1.3. On Individuals, Intermittence, and Antecedents

Illustrating the primacy of the individual response is central to this thesis because the components of the prison world model only “light up” and function when they enter into relation with the figure entering into the prison world as such: the *individual*. Since prisonization is a process eliciting different responses amongst different individuals — for example, one could be an *authentic* intransigent or a tactical, *inauthentic* one — it is a general process that does not take hold equally in all people, always necessarily leaving parts of previous identities intact by never completely stripping all the remnants of home worlds (Gillespie 2003: 46). Prisonization is therefore *intermittent* (ibid.). Degree of intermittence is determined by what Gillespie called the *micro* and *macro antecedents* of prisonization (ibid.). The micro antecedents of prisonization are the pre-prison attributes or characteristics of individuals which affect and determine their degree of socialisation into the prisoner subculture; as pre-situational determinants or “predictors” they are the different *variables* derived from the heterogeneous biographies of persons (ibid.). The macro antecedents of prisonization are the indigenous factors or “contextual features of prisons that influence the rates of socialization into the inmate subculture” (ibid. 49, 54). The logical formula that follows the differentiation of antecedents is that the relation between individual and prison world is thus exactly equivalent to the relation between micro antecedents and macro antecedents.

2.1.4. On Incoherencies in the Theory of Prisonization

Unfortunately, the logic and usefulness of Gillespie's distinction is undermined by the author himself, with its theoretically-problematic nature in need of reformulation. Confusion here is caused by two major incoherencies. The first derives from Gillespie's following notes: "Scholars agree that both the deprivation and importation models are relevant for understanding the micro antecedents of prisonization" and "research has enumerated several [micro] antecedents of prisonization that include variables from both theoretical models" (ibid. 46). By this point there is already conflict with previously-given definitions. Namely, if micro antecedents are understood as *pre-prison* variables, they must necessarily be linked with *importations* only (even if these importations have to do with prior prison experience[s]). Conversely, if macro antecedents are understood as the variables of the prison itself, they have an organic connection to deprivations as such. Logic would thus dictate — if only for heuristic reasons — that deprivational variables be excluded from micro antecedents (and left for the prison world).

However, the examples of micro antecedents given by Gillespie are a haphazard smattering of variables including deprivations and general contextual features of prisons themselves. He is thus *mixing up* his two definitions. For instance, he cites studies that use indigenous features — "difficulties of prison life" or "situational influences" — as examples of micro antecedents which could affect prisonization, including: frequency or intensity of contact or interpersonal involvement among both inmates and staff, in-prison gambling, special programs offered such as drug treatment or therapy, the social roles found in the prisoner subculture, staff orientation, and so on (ibid. 46-54).

Positing deprivations and other general features of prisons themselves — some of which are caused by these deprivations, mainly prisoner-subcultural aspects — as micro antecedents (and not macro ones) is nothing but confusing. The mixing of micro and macro is a product of Gillespie's main aim, to describe prisonization in light of a synthesis between both importation and deprivation models, which is why he approvingly notes that "[some studies have] confirmed that pre-prison characteristics and situational deprivations are both important antecedents of prisonization" (ibid. 53). In this passage, Gillespie is actually *contrasting* micro antecedents with deprivations, whereas before he considered deprivations as belonging to the micro. To avoid this

unnecessary confusion, the formula must be made explicit: any features belonging to the prison context as such — including deprivations — shall be considered macro antecedents of prisonization, while any features belonging to the individual — all of their importations — shall be considered micro antecedents of prisonization.

This reformulation is also related to the second incoherency present in Gillespie's conception, one inherited from the Clemmer-Sykes tradition. In the latter, as commented on, prisonization is only understood as a process entailing socialisation directly into the prisoner subculture and the inmate code on which it is pillared. In this outlook, the more prisonized an individual, the more they take on criminal values and stand in a “dual normative orientation comprised of attitudes and beliefs that reflect opposition to [prison] staff and loyalty to other inmates” (ibid. 48, 65). Even post-Big House or post-Irwinian research — emphasising the new “social units of inmate cohesion” (such as gang affiliations) rather than a traditionally-organised convict subculture — understood prisonization as a “process whereby [inmates] learn the norms of the gang” and are “socialized into gangs” (ibid. 63-64).

The problem with such a conception is that it frames the interior of the prison in a way that overemphasises subculture(s) and underlying codes, positing the latter as the dominant features of the prison world. In this frame, the conception of prisonization remains much too narrow. One therefore encounters unclear arguments, such as that the argot role of “punk” — men forced into sexual slavery and the performance of homosexual acts in prison, but who are not necessarily anti-establishment — are *not* prisonized, with only argot roles such as the “real man” adhering to the (narrow) criteria of prisonization, because only certain argot roles entail the solidarity and opposition to staff characteristic of the inmate subculture (ibid. 50).

To argue that punks are not prisonized only holds if prisonization is understood in the narrow confines of its original formulation. But in sticking to this strict view, one would then need a *new* concept to describe the socialisation process of the punk. And this is not just the case for socialisation processes: one would also need a general concept — or a handful of concepts — for all types of processes affecting newly-imprisoned individuals. For example: the non-social, “ecological” processes of the physical environment said to cause sensory deprivation, “boredom, restlessness, anxiety, hunger, cognitive inefficiencies (e.g. an inability to concentrate, think

clearly, loss of contact with reality), speech impairments, emotionality, and temporal disorientations” (ibid. 56).

Therefore, the process of prisonization must be expanded and understood beyond the narrow confines of simply being a process of socialisation into subcultures and codes, which also entails a scientific shift away from the fact that “[m]ost research on prisonization has focused on the individual predictors of socialization into the inmate subculture” (ibid. 54). Instead, prisonization must be understood in the *wide sense*, as a *general process of accommodating to the prison world and all of its components*. First and foremost, it must be made explicit that the interior of the prison — the prison world as such — *is composed of much more than simply a sub- or sociocultural component*. In this scenario, the notion of *culturation* must also be expanded; perhaps paradoxically, one could thus talk about ecological “disculturations” and “enculturations” caused by the physical environment. Widening the sense of prisonization also supports many of the old criticisms of the concept, which debated the fact that inmates necessarily adhere to the tenets of loyalty, solidarity and violence into one general macro-group, or even if prisonization entailed enculturation into *any* type of specific social group (ibid. 59-61). A prisonized individual *could* join the prisoner subculture or a gang, but could *also*, say, have as an individual, non-collective response *self-interest* (ibid.), personal war, or a mental breakdown.

2.1.5. On Macro and Micro Antecedents

Macro and micro antecedents together determine the nature and extent of prisonization, now understood in its *wide sense* (as more than just a process of socialisation into the prisoner subculture). Macro antecedents may now be understood as the components that make up the prison world. The construction of the prison world model is thus exactly equivalent to the elucidation of the macro antecedents that compose the prison world. And micro antecedents may now be unambiguously understood as the variables carried by each and every individual prior to incarceration, of which there are countless examples (ibid. 46-54).

Obvious ones are sociodemographic: age (at current commitment), class, ethnicity, family composition (such as number of siblings), migration(s), nationality, race, regional conditioning (rural or urban), religion, residence, sex, sexual orientation, etc. Employment (present or prior)

and other aspects of an individual's life history are also important, notably criminality (prior criminal history)²⁸. When entering prison, the length of the sentence — and the individual's knowledge of it — is also a key micro antecedent, as is a person's education²⁹. Also important is the extent of social capital, both the extent of relationships with the outside — number of family, friends, and/or relatives, how well relations with them are maintained, whether they are healthy ones or not, what their status is at the present moment, etc. — as well as the extent of prior affiliations or friendships within the prison world itself (number of contacts on the inside within primary groups of the prison; whether the individual is a “clique member or isolate”). In general, an individual's *personality* — the degree of stability or instability inherent to their psychology — is a crucial variable determining a more or less blind acceptance of the prison world and participation therein³⁰; variables include consistency in individual self-conception, identification (“social anchorage”) with various reference groups (whether criminal or not), expectations (of both the upcoming incarceration as well as extra- or post-prison life), and feelings (especially negative ones such as alienation, loss of aspiration, powerlessness, and so on), amongst others.

2.1.6. On the Prisonization of Jack London

The general process of prisonization is clearly visible in two works written by Jack London. In 1894, eighteen-year-old London — the hobo *par excellence* who by that time had already grown up “in poverty and hardship,” quit school, and worked as a canner as well as sailor “raiding oyster fishermen in the bay” (and whose later career would include factory worker, Klondike gold rusher, and prolific author, amongst other things) — spent one month as a prisoner in New York State (Franklin 1998c: 37). Describing his prison experiences, London gave a crucial self-

²⁸ This may include: age at first arrest (and other arrests) and number of previous arrests, extensiveness of criminal record as well as sorts of offenses (whether violent or non-violent), previous exposures to criminal subcultures (whether convict or outside) and their durations, prior incarcerations and time (such as years) spent in prison (number and durations of previous sentences and previous exposures to prison), etc. (Gillespie 2003: 46-54).

²⁹ Achievements and levels, grades, number of suspensions or trancies, etc. Related to this, IQ is also considered a micro antecedent (Gillespie 2003: 46-54).

³⁰ Whether this acceptance (embracement or rejection of conformity) and participation concerns the codes and dogmas of the official authorities, those of the prisoner subculture, or those of other components of the prison world.

characterisation: “Now it happens that I am a fluid sort of an organism, with sufficient kinship with life to fit myself in ‘most anywhere’ (1998a: 42). The micro antecedent of *fluidity* thus prepared him for the ordeal that followed his arrest in Niagara Falls “by a fee-hunting constable,” whereafter he was “denied the right to plead guilty or not guilty, sentenced out of hand to thirty days’ imprisonment for having no fixed abode and no visible means of support, handcuffed and chained to a bunch of men similarly circumstanced, carted down country to Buffalo, [and] registered at the Erie County Penitentiary³¹” (in Franklin 1998c: 37). London knew he was not “bound for a petty jail with a hundred or so prisoners in it” but for a “full-grown penitentiary with a couple of thousand prisoners in it,” so to survive the “[t]hirty days of mystery” before him, he scoped the train for “somebody who knew the ropes” (1998a: 42-43):

‘In the seat behind me [...] was a squat, heavily-built, powerfully-muscled man. He was somewhere between thirty-five and forty[.] I sized him up. In the corners of his eyes I saw humor and laughter and kindliness. As for the rest of him, he was a brute-beast, wholly unmoral, and with all the passion and turgid violence of the brute-beast. What saved him, what made him possible for me, were those corners of his eyes — the humor and laughter and kindliness of the beast when unaroused. He was my “meat.” I “cottoned” to him. [...] I talked with the man in the seat behind me. He had an empty pipe. I filled it for him with my precious tobacco — enough in a single filling to make a dozen cigarettes. Nay, the more we talked the surer I was that he was my meat, and I divided all my tobacco with him. [...] I laid myself out to fit in with that man, though little did I dream to what extraordinary good purpose I was succeeding. He had never been to the particular pen[...] to which we were going, but he had done [“spots”] in various other penitentiaries (a “spot” is a year), and he was filled with wisdom. We became pretty chummy, and my heart bounded when he cautioned me to follow his lead. He called me “Jack,” and I called him “Jack.”

London has added a new micro antecedent: an experienced ally, who now guides him every step of the way upon arrival to Erie County. When officials remove the handcuffs of the newcomers and warn them to disburden themselves of valuables — matches, money and small change, pipes, pocket-knives, rice-paper, tobacco, etc. — or risk having them confiscated inside, London’s chum shakes his head, instead instructing London to bundle them up inside his handkerchief; as a procession of over forty inmates marches to a new section of the prison,

³¹ London describes these experiences vividly — his stay in a holding cell called the “Hobo,” the “shock” he received at his farce of a trial, being handcuffed to a “too happy negro” and stared at on the train, etc. (1998a: 38-43) — but the description of his arrival at Erie is most valuable. It is possible to posit these other experiences as a kind of extended or “proto-” prisonization occurring before his arrival to Erie, but this will not be done here.

London's "Jack" promptly hisses to a stonefaced convict leaning on a gallery railing, exchanges hand signals, and flings his bundle through the air to be caught by his contact, eventually getting London to do the same (ibid. 43-45). London's humiliations are thus somewhat mitigated by his new ally, but not fully: loss of possessions is but one of the degrading rites he and the other convicts undergo. After removal of handcuffs and disembodying of property, London describes a process of constant halting and waiting in areas known as "halls" (ibid. 44):

"Know, ye unimprisoned, that traffic is as restricted inside a large prison as commerce was in the Middle Ages. Once inside [...] one cannot move about at will. Every few steps are encountered great steel doors or gates [...] always kept locked. We were bound for the barber-shop, but we encountered delays in the unlocking of doors[.]"

After entering the barber-shop all of the convicts were forced to strip and bathe, each man made to scrub the back of his neighbour with hot water and soap, inside of a tub. Afterwards they were all given canvas clothes-bags into which to put clothes, and warned of the impossibility of smuggling anything in, because of the upcoming inspection, to be done naked. Meanwhile, barber-shop "grafters" walked around "kindly volunteering to take charge" of precious belongings, and to return them later (this of course being a scam). Thereafter, the "quickest shaves and hair-cuts" London had "ever seen were given" ("barbers shaved [...] at the rate of a minute to a man" while a "hair-cut took a trifle longer"). Then came the inspection, and the bringing of new clothes ("stout prison shirts, and coats and trousers conspicuously striped"). London thus "put on the insignia of shame and got [his] first taste of marching the lock-step"; finally, the single file procession of inmates walking "each man's hands on the shoulders of the man in front" were marched into another hall, "ordered to strip [their] left arms," and had a medical student "who was getting in practice on cattle such as we" to vaccinate them at a rate "four times as rapidly as the barbers shaved." After being told to "Suck it out" by his meat, London sucked his arm clean before being led to his cell and meeting his cell-mate (this saved him the misery of "men who had not sucked [out the vaccine] and who had horrible holes in their arms into which" London "could have thrust [his] fist") (all ibid. 44-46).

London has undergone a preliminary process of prisonization, based on both micro and macro antecedents. He has been discultured (infantilised, mortified, "stripped"): "Beards,

mustaches, like our clothes and everything, came off [and] we were a villainous-looking gang when they got through with us” (ibid. 45). London described a slow process of “indignation ebb[ing] away”: in his early days of imprisonment, he was convinced he would “show them when I got out” — “them” being the unfair criminal justice system which had denied him his basic rights — but eventually the “tides of fear” rushed into him when he saw what he “was up against,” thereafter growing “meek and lowly³²” (ibid. 48-49).

But London has not only been beaten down. He has also been encultured and appropriated aspects of the prison world, and would continue to do so (ibid. 45):

“[The barbers] fairly bulged with the spoil, and the guards made believe not to see. To cut the story short, nothing was ever returned. [They] never had any intention of returning what they had taken. They considered it legitimately theirs. It was the barber-shop graft. There were many grafts in that prison, as I was to learn; and I, too, was destined to become a grafter — thanks to my new pal.”

Thanks to his “new pal” and various cell-mates, London would — by the end of his imprisonment — have “learned a few” about the grafts, physical conditions, vermin, violence, and all other aspects of his prison world, enough to become characteristic of it (1998a; 1998b).

2.1.7. On the Prisonization of Boy Prisoners and “Pull”

London’s rise to a prominent position in the prisoner hierarchy (ibid.) — on the basis of his fluid nature, or “the crucial contradictions in [his] character” (Franklin 1998d: 38) — is a somewhat “successful” case of prisonization, inasmuch as his adjustment occurred smoothly. But not all cases turn out this way. For instance, James E. Robertson has documented the plight of American “boy prisoners” — “men under age eighteen at the commission of their offenses who were tried as adults and sentenced as [such] to jails, state prisons, or federal prisons” — and the process by which they are *turned out* (lose their manhood and have their “gender socially reconstructed,”

³² London was angry that he had been denied his right for a jury, his right to plead guilty or not guilty, and so on. Instead, his trial was impersonal and automatic (Wicker 1998: xi), his face had been shaved, hair cropped close, convict stripes forced on, and he “was forced to toil hard on a diet of bread and water and to march the shameful lock-step with armed guards” over him (echoing Sykes’ ideas, he lamented: “and all for what? What had I done [...] that all this vengeance should be wreaked upon me?”) (London 1998a: 48).

becoming punks or “non-men” in a “humiliating, scorned gender assignment” at “the bottom of the prison gender order”) (2011: 819-821). That is, boys in prison — often outwardly defiant and tough, inwardly terrified — are intimidated, threatened, or raped and gangraped by older men, and then categorised as feminine persons serving “their sentences as neither boys nor men,” now branded as an open target for future sexual attacks (ibid.). Often times, these boys enter prison with knowledge — usually offered by psychologists — that to survive doing “adult time” they must “find a man” to protect them; these men “own” them, just like others may own them (force them into sexual slavery, kill them) if they are not protected (ibid.). One possible consequence of being turned out — coerced into the performance of homosexual acts — is a confused gender identity, a “sexual reorientation” wherein the boy prisoner is unsure of his sexual preferences (heterosexual or homosexual); oftentimes they are attracted to naive and young boys, those who mirror the micro antecedent of “innocence” they first entered prison with (ibid.).

These boys lack micro antecedents such as contacts, experience, physical strength, and so on; armed only with slight knowledge, and they also lack what London called *pull* (1998b: 55):

“Sometimes [...] a newcomer arrives upon whom no grafts are to be worked. The mysterious word is passed along that he is to be treated decently. [...] [He may have “pull”] with one of the superior hall-men; [...] with one of the guards in some other part of the prison; it may be that good treatment has been purchased from grafters higher up; but be it as it may, we know that it is up to us to treat him decently if we want to avoid trouble³³.”

2.1.8. On Becoming, Processing, Initiation, and Liminality

Understanding prisonization is aided by Gilles Deleuze’s concept of *becoming*, defined by Ronald Bogue as “a passage between things, a decoding that proceeds via a mutative interaction with the stigmatized term of a binary power relation” (2004: 72-73). As an individual “passes” from what was once a citizen — or a boy, or a heterosexual, etc. — they “become” something

³³ “Pull” as a micro antecedent can also come in the form of a reputation affecting prisonization. For instance, Christians in the Roman Empire were imprisoned in inner parts of prisons because “of their jailers’ fear that they might escape by means of magic” (Peters 1995: 22). However, the idea of pull can be illusional. According to David Grann, when an Italian mafia boss was imprisoned in Marion, Illinois, his reputation did not stop a black inmate from assaulting him, whereafter the don used his wealth to pay white prison gangsters to plan a retaliation (2004: 169). That is, this mafioso needed to resort to the micro antecedent of financial capital because his cultural and social capitals — including his “pull” — were lacking.

else: colonised, converted, intransigent, withdrawn, a punk, etc. *ad infinitum* depending on the particularity of the prisonization (there are many things one could “become” on the basis of the combination of micro and macro antecedents). In general, one could speak of *becoming-prisonized*. And since becoming implies a *process*, prisonization is thus also a process. That prisonization is a process is seen in the use of the term “processing” to refer to the institutional procedures undergone by new admissions. Processing is the official welcome described by London, as well as posited in the case of various boy prisoners (see Robertson 2011: 819).

Other than a processual becoming, prisonization was also posited by Goffman as an *initiation* or *rite of passage* (in Gillespie 2003: 46). Initiations are characterised by *waiting* — such as the in-prison restriction of traffic described by London — and also *change* (such as the in-prison “becoming-grafter” out of hobo). Prisonization as a rite of passage characterised by waiting and change also links it with the concept of *liminality*, as described by Victor W. Turner (1967). Liminality is useful in conceptualising the period of time when a new inmate is being both stripped and appropriated — discultured and encultured — prior to arrival at a new state.

All rituals are composed of three parts — separation, margin, aggregation — of which the marginal period is liminal. One of the most important class of rituals is that of the rites of passage, which constitute *transitions* between *states*³⁴: recognised, recurring, and “relatively fixed or stable position[s]” (ibid.). Rites of passage “are found in all societies but tend to reach their maximal expression in small-scale, relatively stable and cyclical societies, where change is bound up with biological and meteorological rhythms and recurrences rather than with technological innovations” (ibid.). Of rites of passage, *initiations* are central³⁵ (ibid.).

While states are “fixed points” in a general “space-time of structural classification,” transitional-beings (liminal *personae*, passengers) are “interstructural,” *neophytes* (initiants or

³⁴ Examples of states include life (state of infancy), puberty (maturation levels, state of adulthood, new age), marriage, death, etc. (Turner 1967). They include social constancies: calling, corporate affiliation, degree, (kinship) position, (legal) status, office, place, profession, (property) rank, and so on, including their accompanying duties, obligations, rights, etc. (ibid.). Or also conditions: cultural, ecological, emotional, mental, physical, etc. (ibid.). Turner (ibid.) also noted that states are found on both the individual and group level (such as a state of war), but for now this will be left aside using the same logic which determined that individual responses precede collective ones.

³⁵ Into cult, exclusive club, political office, religious group, secret society, or something more general (Turner 1967).

novices) in the “process” of “becoming” *initiates* with a new status (whether achieved or ascribed), during which they are malleable *prima materia*, existing in a promiscuous, speculative realm of pure possibility with none of the attributes of either the past or coming state, a “stage of reflection” wherein they are free to “juggle with the factors of existence” and try out “novel configurations of ideas and relations³⁶” (ibid.). At this time, these beings are contradictory, ambiguous, “betwixt and between,” dynamic, invisible, and neutral, undergoing a change in being, progressive movement, or ontological transformation, presently outside of category, definition, order, or principle, in a condition of “sacred poverty,” naked, roleless, uncommitted, vulnerable, and “structureless” (or “unstructured,” both “destructured” *and* “prestructured”) (ibid.). As paradoxes metaphorically both “alive” *and* “dead,” liminal beings are “polluting.”

Initiation entails communication — action, exhibition, instruction — and subsequent reintegration via submission to an absolute, abstract authority representing the total power of a community and tradition (ibid.). Initiation entails gaining access to the latter’s *gnosis* — arcane knowledge, esoteric teaching, mystery, mystical power, or *sacra* — which now permeates all understandings of reality on the level of the non-logical or non-rational *assumption*, one not needing data, evidence, fact, or proof (ibid.). Now “made men” once more subject to custom and law, initiates know breaking these has disastrous consequences: there is no space for “compromise, evasion, manipulation, casuistry, and maneuver” in any field (ibid.). Adjusting the anthropological parameters of Turner’s formulation for the specifics of the prison world, all that has been said about liminality and the liminal phase of initiation may also be applied to prisonization, understood in its wide sense and also as a process of becoming.

2.1.9. On Other Considerations, and Consequences of Prisonization

The old, narrow concept of prisonization has other considerations which may be extrapolated onto the wider sense. For instance, some authors posited a temporal aspect to prisonization, notably in the concept of *phases of incarceration*, where a distinction between types of inmates

³⁶ Pertaining to actions, beliefs, customs, events, experiences, facts, features or qualities, feelings or sentiments, habits, knowledge, laws, metaphorical attributions, norms, objects, persons, relationships, religiosity, rules, techniques, thoughts, values, etc. (Turner 1967).

is made: *early phase* ones have served less than six months of their sentence, *middle phase* ones more than six months but having at least six months to go, and *late phase* ones having less than six months to serve (Gillespie 2003: 47-49). Here prisonization is said to be *U-shaped*, based on the length of time spent incarcerated and proportion of time served: “as time served increased, so did prisonization” — with middle phase inmates the most prisonized — with prisonization being said to decrease or lessen for late phase inmates nearing release³⁷ (ibid.).

The notion of prisonization “decreasing” pertains to the *consequences* of prisonization: as an intermittent process, is becoming-prisonized *within* the prison world a reversible process entailing a kind of “reverse-prisonization” when released from prison? Clemmer believed in extra-prison consequences, that prisonization would hinder rehabilitation and be so disruptive and detrimental that post-prison (re)adjustment to outside daily life would be next to impossible (Gillespie 2003: 45, 57):

“Anticipating labeling theory, [Clemmer] proposed that imprisonment may actually be a source of criminality. The socialization process that inmates undergo inside prison may then more sophisticated and elaborate methods of breaking the law. In other words, incarceration may exacerbate criminal careers and breed crime. Clemmer was also one of the first scholars to relate prisonization with parole violations and recidivism³⁸.”

Extra-prison consequences include inability to get work (and even if achieved, it is usually “poor”), hatred of criminal justice as such, lack of self-esteem, a life of crime, etc. (ibid. 57):

“The inmate subculture provides an expedient way for inmates to regain their self-esteem and counteract the pains of imprisonment. Convicts come to depend upon the subculture and ignore alternate ways to build self-esteem. Once prisonization occurs, inmates are less likely to obtain job training or preparation that would help them secure employment upon release. However, when released, a prisonized inmate does not have the subculture from which to

³⁷ Another consideration is the role of *chance* in prisonization, which mainly adheres to the category of macro antecedents, especially in terms of the chance placement of new inmates within cellhouse and work station, and with cellmate (Gillespie 2003: 47). But it could also apply to the chance present in individual life histories, thus being a micro antecedent. Or, chance could also possibly be seen as a wider worldly “force” or structural antecedent.

³⁸ This line of thinking has posited prison as a *criminogenic force* or *school for criminals*, and led to the birth of concepts such “the indeterminate sentence, parole release decision, conditional release and supervision, and habitual criminal laws,” as well as science fiction works touching on how to reorient people through the use of various procedures such as the Ludovici technique in *A Clockwork Orange* (Morris and Rothman 1995: xii-xiii).

draw self-esteem and is ill-prepared to enter the workforce. Crime, leading to parole violations, may be the only means by which a highly prisonized inmate can survive on the outside.”

The consequences of London’s prisonization included humility and wisdom (1998a: 49):

“Each day I resolved more emphatically to make no rumpus when I got out. All I asked, when I got out, was a chance to fade away from the landscape. And that was just what I did do when I was released. I kept my tongue between my teeth, walked softly, and sneaked for Pennsylvania, a wiser and humbler man.”

In sum, reformulating prisonization is relevant to the construction of the prison world model because it allows for the reformulation of the research question posed earlier, from “What are the main features of the prison world, and what are the nature of their relations?” to “What are the *macro antecedents* of the prison world that affect the *prisonization* of the *individual* (the carrier of *micro antecedents*), and what are the nature of their relations?” Though intermittent, prisonization is not something “chosen” or “earned,” but a general process (ecological, social, etc.) affecting anybody — and not just “some” individuals — entering into the prison world.

2.2. On Tribalism

2.2.1. On Tribal Initiation and *Gnosis*

While prisonization is an initiatory rite of passage with a liminal phase — where the new, “polluting” inmates are termed “fish” or “swab” (Gillespie 2003: 46) — these concepts are most useful describing the first major macro antecedent of the prison world: *tribalism*. In the USA, for instance, Grann has described features of the Aryan Brotherhood (AB) (or “The Brand”) prison gang, who instead of aiming to simply build numbers by recruiting fish as other gangs do, only solicit “the most capable and violent” (2004: 158-159). To be accepted, a recruit has to *make his bones* (kill another inmate), a rite intended “to create a lasting bond to the A.B. and also prove he has what it takes” (ibid. 159). *Made* members who have “earned their way in” also take a *blood in, blood out* oath, a vow stating “not only that [a member] would spill another’s blood to get in but also that he would never leave the gang until his own blood was fatally spilled” (ibid. 157,

159, 161). Pre-aggregation, the liminal period of initiation consists of (except in cases of special exception) a “probationary period, which often last[s] as long as a year” (ibid. 159).

Neophytes who reach the state of gang membership are communicated into the AB tribe via “a curriculum that formed a kind of world view,” with the strongest and most able fighters given books that tailor them for leadership: Niccolò Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War*, the aphorisms of Friedrich Nietzsche³⁹, and Louis L’Amour’s ‘pulp novels about romantic gunslingers who ride for “the brand,” [which] inspired the gang’s nickname’ (ibid. 160, 158). Members were “trained to kill without blinking [or] reservation,” and studied anatomy texts, so “that when they stab somebody it was a killshot”; an AB instruction manual made exactly for this purpose stated: “The smell of fresh human blood can be overpowering but killing is like having sex. The first time is not so rewarding, but it gets better and better with practice, especially when one remembers that it’s a holy cause” (ibid. 160). A member noted that “[k]nife fighting, at its best, is like a dance. Under ideal conditions, the objective is to bleed your opponent — cutting hands, wrist, and arms and as the opponent weakens from blood loss, inflicting further damage to the face (eyes) and torso”; this same member demonstrated in “clinical fashion” various assassination methods, ways to shank, slice, or stab the aorta, neck, or spine (to cause paralysis), and also commented (ibid. 160, 164):

“It was like you went to school. You already hate the system, hate the establishment, because you’re in jail, you’re buried, and start to think of yourself as this noble warrior — and that’s what we called each other, warriors. It was like I was a soldier going out to battle.”

The “*gnosis*” of the AB consists of its code, one rooted in racism and violence (seen as a way of “bending space and reality to [their] will” in the Nietzschean sense) (ibid. 159, 161). The AB killed others on the basis of what could be called their *convictions*: blacks, child killers or molesters, prison guards, rival gang members, sex offenders, “snitches” (“rats”), etc.⁴⁰ were all considered enemies whose blood could be shed (ibid. 158-171).

³⁹ “One should die proudly when it is no longer possible to live proudly” (in Grann 2004: 160).

⁴⁰ Including homosexuals: “the gang considered open homosexuality a sign of weakness, a violation of the A.B. code,” with overt love between males and public displays such as kissing punishable by death (Grann 2004: 165).

Sociologists have deemed the AB a cloistered, invisible, or secret society, while members speak of it in terms of a “family,” “inner sanctum,” or “sanctuary” — or *tribe* — existing *within* a larger, different society (ibid. 157-161). A major member commented (ibid. 157-158):

“[W]e live in a different society than you do. There is justified violence in our society. [I am not] a peaceful man [and] if you disrespect me or one of my friends, I will readily and to the very best of my ability engage you in a full combat mode. That’s what I’m about.”

Brotherhood as such is emphasised by the pledges given to initiands-cum-initiates⁴¹, and the idea of a shared code is echoed in the discourse of other members: “There’s a code in every segment of society. [...] Well, we have a different kind of moral and ethical code. [...] It’s a lot more primordial,” and “In your society I may not be anybody, but here I am” (Grann 2004: 159-160).

2.2.2. On Racial Organisation

The emphasis on a holy code and “primordial” violence is not unique to the AB. The AB tribe was one of four super gangs born in 1960s California — alongside the Black Guerrilla Family (BGF), Mexican Mafia (MM), and La Nuestra Familia (NF) — “built around racial symbolism and ideology,” and who engaged in protracted *race wars* one with another; even between Chicanos, the violent feud between the MM and NF amounted to nearly sixty deaths and three hundred stabbings in the years 1971-1973⁴² (Jacobs 1979: 13). These groups too have their codes: the NF, for instance, has a “code of secrecy rooted in the barrio culture and the creed of *machismo*” (ibid.). While the BGF “emerged as an umbrella organization for blacks,” the AB was ‘a neo-Nazi organization served to organized whites, particularly rural “okies” and “bikers” (motorcycle gang members)’ (ibid.). The AB emerged in 1964 — when “a clique of white inmates at San Quentin prison [...] began gathering in the yard, who were mostly

⁴¹ Such as: “An Aryan brother is without a care / He walks where the weak and heartless won’t dare / And if by chance he should stumble and lose control / His brothers will be there, to help reach his goal / For a worthy brother, no need is too great / He need not but ask, fulfillment’s his fate / For an Aryan brother, death holds no fear / Vengeance will be his, through his brothers still here” (in Grann 2004: 159).

⁴² Jacobs noted the “real and imaginary structure and activities of the two organizations have captured the imagination of many California prison officials and prisoners” (1979: 13).

motorcycle bikers with long hair and handlebar mustaches; a few were neo-Nazis with tattoos of swastikas” — as “the nation’s racial unrest spread” into the prisons (Grann 2004: 158). As “one of the few gangs that were born in prison,” the AB “decided to strike against the blacks, who were forming their own militant group,” and here primordialism was on full display (ibid.):

“Initially, the whites called themselves the Diamond Tooth Gang, and as they roamed the yard they were unmistakable: pieces of glass embedded in their teeth glinted in the sunlight. Before long, they had merged with other whites [...] to form a single band[.] While there had always been cliques in prison, known as “tips,” these men were now aligned by race and resorted to a kind of violence that had never been seen at San Quentin, a place that prisoners likened to “gladiator school” [where] “[e]verything was seen through the delusional lens of race[.]”

Post-Black Muslims⁴³, ethnocentric and militant gangs built around racial-ethnic pride became the norm; emphasis was on *ingroup relatedness* and *outgroup avoidance* (Jacobs 1979: 10-15):

‘Inside the prison interracial hostilities intensify because intraracial peer groups completely dominate the lives of the prisoners. Few, if any, other activities or interests compete for a prisoner’s energies. Inmates live as if in fish tanks where behavior is continuously scrutinized. Under such circumstances “hardline” racist norms are easy for leaders to enforce and difficult for individual prisoners to ignore.’

In this context⁴⁴, interaction — chatting with, sitting next to, sharing⁴⁵, etc. — with another race is punishable by physical attack or death and enforced by the “hard core racist” power factions of each group who emphasise solidarity and group consciousness⁴⁶, a situation at the time noted all over prisons in the USA: California state prisons (adult and juvenile), Rhode Island maximum-security prisons, Ohio juvenile facilities, New York state prisons, etc. (ibid. 12-18).

⁴³ Jacobs wrote (1979: 6-7): ‘The Black Muslims actively proselytized black prisoners, preaching a doctrine of black superiority. They imported the spirit of “black nationalism” into the prisons [and] catalyzed the frustration and bitterness of black prisoners.’

⁴⁴ “Behind the walls, white, black, and Spanish-speaking inmates [Mexicans, Puerto Ricans] exist in separate conflict-ridden social worlds”; “the first prison race riot occurred in Virginia in 1962”; ‘North Dakota and Minnesota are two states with a visible native American presence in prison [and] one cell house wing at the Stillwater maximum security unit is known as “the reservation” ’ (Jacobs 1979: 1, 11).

⁴⁵ Bathrooms, cigarettes, drink, food, etc.

⁴⁶ “Black power,” “blackness,” “Mexican power,” “white power,” “whiteness,” etc. (Jacobs 1979: 14).

According to Jacobs, a common theme of this new era is the hegemony of minority prisoners — especially blacks — who are able to control prisons, even when they are not numerically dominant: “The key to black dominance is their greater solidarity and ability to intimidate whites⁴⁷.” That is, other than in California only certain other places were “Italian cliques shrouded in the Mafia mystique” able to protect themselves, with whites in general unable to organise (ibid. 12-18). The tribal incompetence of whites — in a time where “ethnic segregation is the first rule of inmate organization” — meant the creation of two parallel codes: “[i]nmate norms for blacks are: exploit whites, do not force sex on blacks, and defend your brother,” and “[i]n contrast whites’ norms include: do not trust anyone, and each man for himself” (ibid. 15). A consequence of this is that blacks — who in general refer to one another as “brothers” and “partners” — exploit and target white inmates for assault and rape⁴⁸ (ibid. 16).

Self-segregation is supported by a bevy of overt, group-specific signifiers: clothing styles, language, mannerisms, music, television programs, and especially *tattoos*, as symbols of ethnic group and power subgroup identification: *La Raza* and the hometown barrio for Mexican-Americans, swastikas and the initials of Nazi political parties for whites, etc. (Jacobs 1979: 14, 17, 21). Initiation into The Brand entails a “branding” wherein “the letters A.B. or the numerals 666, symbolizing the beast, a manifestation of evil in the Revelation of St. John” are tattooed, or the most famous of the AB tattoos is given: a green shamrock (Grann 2004: 159).

2.2.3. On Spirituality: Religion, Mythopoeia, Totemism

The Biblical reference here also points to the importance of *spirituality* in prison world tribalism. One official told Grann that a high-ranking member of the AB has “become its Christ figure” within “the gang’s lore” (2004: 168). This martyrdom could be called *apotheosis*, *deification*, or

⁴⁷ “[W]hite cliques are too weak to offer individuals any protection in the predatory prisoner subculture” because “group consciousness” is more likely to develop on the basis of ethnicity than it is based on the idea of “whiteness,” which is very fringe in relation to the notion of “blackness” in the USA (Jacobs 1979: 17-18).

⁴⁸ That being said, Grann has noted that as the AB spread to other states they too partook in the violence: inmates “were frequently killing each other not because of any actual slight but because of the color of their skin,” with AB members boasting that they have had “guts splattered all over [their] chest from race wars” while dragging the bloody corpses of blacks through prison tiers, with other inmates chanting racial slurs (2004: 160-161).

euhemerism. And Hamm has investigated prison *religion* in the United States, both Judeo-Christian as well as *non-traditional* faiths or faith groups⁴⁹: Black Hebrew Israelism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Native-American, white supremacy religions (Odin/Asatru and Christian Identity), and Wicca (2007b: 4). Hamm noted: “Today, there are thousands of followers of non-Judeo-Christian faith groups in American [prisons]” and that “many of [them] began their incarceration with little or no religious calling, but converted during their imprisonment” (ibid. 3).

Historically, the primary emphasis in research done on non-traditional faiths in American prisons has been on Islam: orthodox or traditional (Shia, Sufi, Sunni, others), Moorish Science Temple, the Nation of Islam, etc. In jungle prisons, in-prison Islam is reorganising the tribal dynamics of prison worlds: as the Nation of Islam is moderating its racial views, more Hispanics and whites are joining a predominantly black society (even a “blonde-haired, blue eyed American” can convert to Islam), gang “dynamics have become extremely complex in recent years as members are now crossing racial lines to increase their numbers for protection” (with some “Neo-Nazis [...] becoming Sunni Muslims”), former “rivals, like the Crips and Bloods, are joining forces under Islamic banners,” and all the while all the different factions of Islam are themselves competing one against the other (2007a: 18, 31; 2007b: 5). The genesis of this reorganisation lies in the historical fact that “Muslim identities intensified among black prison inmates [and] by 1972 [...] were widely adopted by Black and Latino gang members in their attempts to mirror Malcolm X’s prison transformation to Islam,” whereafter “American gangs have embraced radicalized, and often religious, identities” (ibid. 2007a: 18).

Moreover, religious groups in prison are “being developed on a prison gang model,” predominantly seen in what Hamm called *Prison Islam*, an American mutation or variation of Islam which uses “cut-and-paste” versions of the Koran to recruit members and is known for being a “gang’s version of Islam” and “encompassing gang values and fierce intra-group loyalties” (2007a: 19-20, 27; 2007b: 3, 5). In 1999 Michigan, one such group — the Melanic Islamic Palace of the Rising Sun — “used their own brand of Islam to wage a holy war against other prisoners” (culminating in a riot), and in England a gang called the Muslim Boys also

⁴⁹ Hamm notes: “Because prisons are isolated and closed communities, non-traditional religions may appear more prominent in prison populations than they do in society [and] represent greater membership options” (2007b: 5).

adopted “gang techniques of intimidation to exert control over the [prison] in which they [were] incarcerated” (ibid.). But such cases are rare: “Islam in prison is not without its problems [...] but they pale in comparison to the dangers posed by such prison gangs as the Crips, the Gangster Disciples, Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), and the notorious Aryan Brotherhood” (Hamm 2007a: 22).

Prison world spirituality does not have to be shaded by such negative precepts. Though Hamm has noted that non-traditional faiths in prison hold the potential for “ideologically-inspired criminality” — especially in jungle prisons with serious overcrowding and gang problems, where it “would be precipitous [...] to close the book on a connection between prisoner conversions to non-traditional religions” and phenomena such as in-prison *radicalisation* and *terrorism* — as a general rule, “Islam provides a self-imposed discipline on inmates which, in turn, gives prison authorities a convenient force to help them maintain order” (ibid. 22-27; 2007b: 5). In general, the debate on in-prison Islam in prison is split into two camps: the *viability* one sees in-prison involvement as a healthy social-psychological phenomenon giving an inmate a calling⁵⁰, while the *alarmists* see Islam as a security threat of unknown magnitude, conversion being a negative event wherein a violence-promoting religion turns the prison into a criminal shadow world and breeding ground for cells — composed of isolated souls turned *true believers* — as prison-house versions of al-Qaeda (ibid. 2007a; 2007b).

Though the destructiveness of an in-prison jihad is rare, when they do come about it is usually through a “process of one-on-one proselytizing” wherein new converts are radicalised by “terrorism kingpins” or *charismatic leaders*, the “hidden hand of prison recruitment” (ibid. 2007a: 7, 32-35; 2007b: 3-5). That is, following recruitment into a religious organisation by prison social networks, initiation into a non-moderate form of in-prison Islam is characterised by

⁵⁰ Leading to commitment, discipline, feelings of control over life (the ability to change oneself and one’s environment), hard work, increased general health and prison security (less infractions), humanisation, moderation, morale, reduction of stress, rehabilitation, self-esteem, self-identity, sobriety (the breaking of drink, drug, and crime cycles), stability, tolerance, understanding of customs, duties, and rights, and so on; Islam thus contributes to positive adjustment, inmate interaction, and self-image, and allows inmates to participate in constructive politics (via a rational understanding of their status and peaceful resistance to oppression and/or racism), take advantage of available resources, use time more productively, and to generally restructure their lives (by dividing the day into prayer, study of sacred texts, and reflection, by creating new ways of self-imposed being in all of eating, dressing, and forming support systems, etc.) (Hamm 2007a: 5-11, 15-17, 19, 21-22, 24-26; 2007b: 3, 6).

a liminal stage wherein the new recruit is taught submission via intense verbal conversations or discussions led by one of “the dozens of high-profile terrorists who are already serving lengthy sentences in American correctional facilities” (ibid.). These leaders are inmates arrested on terrorism-related charges, usually Wahhabi clerics skilled in creating “[d]ie-hard extremists” by cementing a “group’s spiritual identity onto its gang history” (ibid.). Thus, “under certain conditions American [prisons] are indeed vulnerable to [...] terrorist groups that infiltrate, recruit, and operate inside the walls” (ibid.).

Radicalisation does not usually succeed in creating a large number of terrorists, only a handful of *authentic* die-hards willing to carry out operational terrorist plots within the prison (and even this is extremely rare); the problem is therefore not number of adherents to Islam in prison, but in the potential of small groups of die-hards to instigate terrorist acts (ibid.). Though only “a minuscule percentage of converts to Islam will turn to radical activism” — and an “even smaller percentage will join terrorist networks,” these in all likelihood being fresh converts (“the newly pious — those with an abundance of emotion and feeling”) — powerful social bonds and the all-trumping “ideological commitment to a cause” is created by a specific method, what could again be called euhemerism, but also the “mythopoeia of modern terrorism” (ibid. 2007a: 32-34). *Mythopoeia* entails the use of “living myths of international terrorism” — such as bin Laden or Carlos the Jackal, representations of the “terrorist as an incandescent celebrity” — as “essential ingredient[s] for prisoners from different prisons in different cultures to create violence in similar ways,” inciting them by “claiming that anti-American terrorists, including the 9/11 hijackers, should be remembered” as *martyrs* and *heroes* (ibid.).

The phenomena of euhemerism, martyrdom, mythopoeia, and/or hero-worship — such as with Malcolm X amongst the newer Black Muslims — also hints at the idea that prison world tribalism is characterised by *totemism*, of the type Claude Lévi-Strauss called Group-Category (1991: 16-17). For example, in the case of the AB there is already a pattern visible with regards to their choice of “idols”: bikers, cowboys, Nazis, St. Patrick, Vikings⁵¹, etc. Furthermore, nicknames of gang members — “the Baron,” “the Hulk,” “Super Honkey” (Grann 2004: 160) —

⁵¹ “Odinism — and its Icelandic counterpart, Asatru — is a reconstruction of Viking-era Norse mythology. It links the racist appeals of the radical right to the occult” (Hamm 2007b: 29).

are also subsumable into this general paradigm. That is, everything in this paradigm — from Nazi to nobleman to super hero — is one that denotes or connotes entities belonging to what one could call the (rarely-seen) Category of *whiteness*; every totem in the AB's Group symbolism is of their “own kind,” a situation common to other racial-ethnic or religious groups or gangs.

2.2.4. On Multiplicity and Singularity of Tribes

Like prison world spirituality — which when not exaggerated by alarmists is generally seen as a constructive, positive experiencing — prison world tribalism in general does not always have to be painted in negative tones: not all prison tribes are racist or “primordially” violent. Nor are they necessarily multiple: the prisoner subculture posited in the early modern Big House, for instance, can be understood as *one single* tribe opposed to the authorities and based on an overarching inmate code, as opposed to the multiple tribes of the race relations era⁵². And inasmuch as prison world tribalism entails spirituality and religion, the figure of the *liberator-saint* — such as St. Eligius, St. Eparchius, St. Gaugericus, St. Germanus, and St. Leonard, some whose entire corpus of miracles concern helping prisoners escape — developed in sixth-century Frankish Gaul is exemplary (Peters 1995: 25-26). Here one can posit a single Christian “tribe” and its saintly “totems” (perhaps also directly opposed to prison authorities, or perhaps not). From this it also follows that although prison world tribalism is most obvious in jungle prisons, it is also present in all other prison worlds. One could thus view prison worlds as the cyclical, small scale, more or less stable formations discussed by Turner, with the society — community, subculture, etc. — within as a more or less “simpler” tribal one (1967).

Black Muslim tribalism created race-based groupings with their own “authority structure[s] and communal interests” (Jacobs 1979: 8). But instead of inter-tribal conflicts such as race wars, conflict can also be intra-tribal. For instance, Jacobs notes that in many American prisons conflict between blacks is only based on degree of politicisation — and not gang warfare — where differentiation is made between “revolutionaries,” “half-steppers,” and “toms” (ibid. 14). In theory, a prison world tribe can also be composed of a single individual. For example, in

⁵² To emphasise this point, the history of prisoner tattooing in general — notably in nineteenth-century France, Italy, and Russia — is a crucial field of exploration which will not be opened up here.

ancient Hebrew society imprisonment was used mainly for holding prophets, who “claiming divine inspiration and command, proved particularly irritating to both kings and priests” and were held in various exalted prisons, as seen with Jeremiah (Peters 1995: 12-13). A similar scenario is positable for imprisoned witches in places like England (see *ibid.* 33). In these cases, “intra-tribal” conflict could be posited as something like a personal crisis of faith, for instance.

2.3. On Racketeering

2.3.1. On Business Interests

In 2004, dozens of AB members were charged with “being members of an elaborate criminal conspiracy” (Grann 2004: 158). Authorities had “once dismissed [the AB] as a fringe white-supremacist gang; now, however, they concluded that what prisoners had claimed for decades was true — namely, that the gang’s hundred or so members, all convicted felons, had gradually taken control of large parts of the nation’s maximum-security prisons, ruling over thousands of inmates and transforming themselves into a powerful criminal organization” (*ibid.*). Moreover, its “leaders, often working out of barren cells in solitary confinement, allegedly ordered scores of stabbings and murders” (*ibid.*). The AB “killed people who stole their drugs, or owed them a few hundred dollars; [...] they killed, most of all, in order to impose a culture of terror that would solidify their power” (*ibid.*). To terrorise the inmate population, the AB would often perform a *demonstration* killing or stabbing, in the words of a high-ranking member “to let these motherf—kers know we mean business” (that there was no fear of repercussions) (*ibid.* 161).

Though “to mean business” is a common English turn of phrase, the use of the word “business” itself illustrates the shift undergone by the AB, from a gang birthed in the tribalism of the jungle prison, to a gang dominated by the second major macro antecedent of the prison world: *racketeering*. What is noteworthy about demonstration killings and the other acts of violence described above is that they were not of the tribal-convictional variety: killing someone due to their race, because they transgressed the AB code, etc. One member noted: “I wasn’t interested in killing blacks. I was interested in only one thing: power” (*ibid.*). And to achieve this power, the gang needed to *streamline*. Grann wrote (*ibid.*):

'As the gang's reputation for brutality was growing, so, too, were its ranks. Although [the AB] continued to permit only a select few to become "made" members, it had thousands of followers, known as "peckerwoods," who sought out the perks of being associated with it: permanent protection, free contraband, better prison jobs (which were often dictated by trusty inmates who did whatever the gang demanded). [...] But as the number of gang members, associates, and hangers-on swelled, managing the organization became increasingly difficult. When [...] in its infancy, every member had an equal vote on critical matters; by the early eighties, this policy was creating chaos.'

Law enforcement officials wrote that the AB "will probably not propose a serious threat [...] in the future unless it gains a clear and well enforced chain of command" (ibid.). Thereafter, high-ranking members made it a goal to "eliminate the irrationality and make it into a true organized crime family" by implementing a new organisational management structure (ibid.). The AB's California leaders therefore "decided to establish a chain of command modelled loosely on the structure of the Italian Mafia" (ibid. 162):

"A council of about a dozen members would manage gang operations throughout the state prison system. Each council member would be elected by majority vote. He would be responsible for enforcing all of the gang's policies, which would now be codified; he could authorize a hit at any moment, as long as it wasn't on a fellow A.B. member. The council's actions would be overseen by a three-man commission. [...] In the federal prison system, where the gang set up a similar hierarchy in roughly a dozen maximum-security prisons [...] high commissioners [ruled]."

Within the gang's new structure, the function of violence changed. Informants were no longer just killed for betraying the AB tribe, but also for transgressing its policies, for being "bad for business." Moreover, demonstration killings and the like were aimed at so-called "innocents," people not directly involved in any racial or inter-tribal conflict. The AB's highest-ever defector said: "I was naïve, because I saw us as these noble warriors. [...] I thought that by organizing we could strip away the irrational killings. But I was foolish, because at some level you could never remove that. And the structure only allowed the gang to be more deadly" (ibid. 164).

The term "irrationality" is misleading. A better word would be Turner's "non-rationality," to refer to the level where tribal *gnosis* becomes unreflective assumption⁵³. In this case, as the

⁵³ In its ideal form, initiation into the *gnosis* of a prison tribe entails a deep appropriation of its "archetypal paradigms," "axiomatic principles," "cultural factors," "numinous measures," "primitive hypotheses," "primordial constituents," *sacerrima* ("most sacred things"), "symbolic templates," ultimate standards of reference, etc. (Turner 1967). That is, the sacralities of the tribe become so taken for granted they become foundational to experience.

AB became more “rational” they became less tribal (less inclined towards unreflective behaviour as product of their tribal values). What the defector meant when he wanted to “strip away the irrational killings” was to consolidate the gang into an organisation so *powerful* that they did not need to murder indiscriminately on the basis of things such as race or gang affiliation (ibid.). In a sense, he wanted the group to evolve past the tribal stage. Instead — though such an evolution indeed took place — tribal violence was replaced with a violence meant to protect the new *business interests* of the AB. This same defector further commented that the AB “is not about white supremacy. It is about supremacy. And it will do anything to get it. Anything” (ibid.).

2.3.2. On Capitalism

The AB thus became a gang focused on controlling prison *rackets* and earning *profit*. AB members arriving at new prisons would flash their shamrock tattoos and charge other inmates to have their photo taken with them, which these inmates “carried around like passports,” comparing the experience to meeting their “favorite pop star” (ibid. 164). The AB’s new goal was to “take over the system,” thus keeping only “remnants of its racist ideology” (a leader is quoted as saying that the AB was no longer primarily “bent on destroying blacks and the Jews and the minorities of the world, white supremacy and all that s—t. It’s a criminal organization, first and foremost”) (ibid. 165). The AB sought “to become a racketeering enterprise” and control the “underground economy” of various prison worlds; their rackets included contract hits (conspiracies to commit murder, murder for hire), drug trafficking, extortion, prostitution (the sale of punks), protection, etc., and in this context their violence made them one of the “most murderous criminal organization[s]” in America, more powerful than the Mafia (ibid. 158, 165).

The prison world was turned into a place of “predators and prey” (ibid. 171). Anything profitable became usurped by the new tribesmen turned *capitalists*, best exemplified by the *exploitation* that took place at Leavenworth prison in the 1990s (ibid. 165):

‘Using an array of white associates, who either coveted membership in the gang or needed protection [...] [the AB] went from tier to tier, demanding a tax from the sale of “pruno” — prison wine that could be brewed out of almost any cafeteria fruit (apples, strawberries, even ketchup).’

The AB also took over the prison's "friendly poker game" and "soon had gambling rackets operating in nearly every unit, on nearly every tier" (ibid.). One "longtime A.B. member compared the illicit operations in maximum-security prisons to bootlegging during Prohibition and to the high-roller tables in Las Vegas" (ibid.):

'Currency is not allowed in prison, and inmates typically paid their smaller debts to the [AB] by offering free contraband or items from the commissary: cigarettes, candy, stamps, books. At the high-roller tables at Leavenworth, where imprisoned drug lords could place bets in the thousands of dollars, participants were allowed to play for a month on credit. The man in charge of the table kept a tally of wins and losses. At the end of the month [the AB] would collect the losses[...]. If an indebted inmate didn't have the money [...] on time, internal prison records show, he was typically "piped" — beaten with a metal rod.'

Instead of being "protectors" of the white race, the AB would scan for "the most vulnerable inmates — those who were drug addicts or in debt to the gang or simply scared," and force them to serve as drug "mules" (ibid. 165-166). Promising these addicts a share, the AB would constantly renege and even beat the mules who they forced to import drugs for them (ibid.):

"Heroin was now flooding into Leavenworth. [...] Because of the scarcity of supply and the unusually high demand in prison, authorities say, a gram of heroin that was bought on the street for sixty-five dollars was selling inside Leavenworth for as much as a thousand dollars. A former council member told [Grann] that the gang was bringing in anywhere from half a million to a million dollars a year from a single prison. [Their] empire [was] expanding."

2.3.3. On Grafting and the Barter Economy

Racketeering also characterises the early modern American prison London was imprisoned in, wherein his *grafts* were entirely analogous to the rackets of the AB. Other than the barbershop graft, London was complicit in many of the other grafts found in Erie County (1998a: 46):

'[London's "pal" had pull and had thus] been promptly appointed a trusty of the kind technically known as "hall-man." The man who had appointed him was also a prisoner and a trusty, and was known as "First Hall-man." There were thirteen hall-men in that hall. Ten of them had charge each of a gallery of cells, and over them were the First, Second, and Third Hall-men.'

The hall-men dominated the grafts, one of these being the bread graft: at noon, as convicts marched in from work, they would break “the lock-step and [take] hands down from the shoulders of their line-mates” to grab bread from piled trays (London 1998b: 50). London’s job was to replace an emptied tray with a full one, then move the tray out of the way when it was again emptied, and so on (ibid.). Meanwhile, the First Hall-man would stand over the tray and use a club to smack the hands of any inmate trying to cop more than one ration of bread; at the same time, “a hundred or so extra rations of bread” would get “hidden away in the cells of the hall-men” (ibid. 50-51). This made of the hall-men “economic masters” inside their hall, “turning the trick in ways quite similar to the economic masters of civilization [who] controlled the food-supply of the population, and, just like [the] brother bandits outside, [...] made the people pay through the nose for it” (ibid. 51).

London compares the behaviour of the hall-men to that of those who they patterned from the outside, the “merchants, bankers, and captains of industry” who did “precisely what we were doing” — “taking candy from a baby” — but “under [a] respectable guise” (ibid.) London noted: “we were wolves, believe me — just like the fellows who do business on Wall Street” (ibid. 53). The peddling of the bread was described as follows (ibid. 51):

“Once a week, the men who worked in the yard received a five-cent plug of chewing tobacco [which] was the coin of the realm. Two or three rations of bread for a plug was the way we exchanged, and they traded, not because they loved tobacco less, but because they loved bread more.”

London does not feel much guilt about his “candy-taking” (ibid.):

“We had to live. And certainly there should be some reward for initiative and enterprise. [...] What awful things would have happened to those poor wretches if it hadn’t been for us, I can’t imagine. Heaven knows we put bread in circulation[.] Ay, and we encouraged frugality and thrift... in the poor devils who forewent their tobacco.”

London justified his behaviour, firstly, by his hunger, and secondly, by viewing the hall-men as akin to the “[s]aviours of society,” who implanted in other convicts “the ambition to become even as we and run a graft” (ibid. 50-51). The prison world’s entire economy was described thusly (ibid. 51-52):

“Here was a hungry man without any tobacco. [...] Very good; he had a pair of suspenders. I exchanged half a dozen rations of bread for it — or a dozen rations if the suspenders were very good. Now I never wore suspenders, but that didn’t matter. Around the corner lodged a long-timer, doing ten years for manslaughter [who] wanted a pair. I could trade them to him for some of his meat [which is] what I wanted. Or perhaps he had a tattered, paper-covered novel. That was treasure-trove. I could read it and then trade it off to the bakers for cake, or to the cooks for meat and vegetables, or to the firemen for decent coffee, or to some one or other for the newspaper that occasionally filtered in, heaven alone knows how. [...] In short, a full-grown system of barter obtained in the Erie County Pen. There was even money in circulation [...] sometimes smuggled in by the short-timers, more frequently [...] the barber-shop graft, where the newcomers were mulcted, but most of all flowed from the cells of the long-timers.”

The First Hall-man “was reputed to be quite wealthy,” and in addition “to his miscellaneous grafts, he would also graft on” the other hall-men: “We farmed the general wretchedness, and the First Hall-man was Farmer-General over all of us. We held our particular grafts by his permission, and we had to pay for that permission” (ibid. 52). The First Hall-man lived in a single cell of “solitary grandeur,” and kept his wealth hidden; indeed, the psychology of all the hall-men was one permeated by distrust, paranoia, and suspicion, caused by the goods or money they had to keep hidden from other, thieving inmates (including their fellow hall-men) (ibid.).

London grafted on his cell-mate — the Third Hall-man — by charging him for the love letters he would write to the woman prisoner locked in the “female department” whom he was in love with (ibid 53). One of the hall-men’s most profitable grafts was “passing the punk,” a “punk” in this context being a narrow strip of thin cloth torn off from the “dirty comforter” found in cell bunks and rolled into a tight cylinder; since this cylinder did not flame, on its end “a coal of fire slowly smouldered” and would last for hours, and when it did finally burn short “all that was necessary was to make a new punk, put the end of it against the old, blow on them, and so transfer the glowing coal” (ibid.; 1998a: 47). Because they were not locked up until late, hall-men could patrol the galleries from cell to cell with their smouldering punks and offer them to those who wanted to smoke, but were lightless; comparing the hall-men to Prometheus, “celestial messengers,” and “fire-bringers” (bringers of the “divine spark”), they nonetheless did not light up those “who refused to dig up,” who therefore went “sparkless and smokeless to bed” (ibid.).

Hall-men were also the “middle-men and common carriers” who “arranged trades between convicts confined in different parts of the prison” (1998b: 55-56). Because they “put

through the exchange,” the hall-men took “commissions coming and going. Sometimes the objects traded had to go through the hands of half a dozen middle-men, each of whom took his whack, or in some way or another was paid for his service” (ibid.):

“Often we conveyed letters, the chain of communication of which was so complex that we knew neither sender nor sendee. We were but links in the chain. Somewhere, somehow, a convict would thrust a letter into my hand with an instruction to pass it on to the next link. All such acts were favors to be reciprocated later on, when I should be acting directly with a principal in transmitting letters, and from whom I should be receiving my pay. The whole prison was covered by a network of lines of communication. And we who were in control of the system of communication, naturally, since we were modelled after capitalistic society, exacted heavy tolls from our customers. It was service for profit with a vengeance[.]”

The grafts of the hall-men were backed up by strategic uses of violence. If other inmates “got fresh” they would undergo “man-handling” or get the “what-for” (ibid. 53-54):

“You see, this was the working-theory of the hall-men. There were thirteen of us. We had something like half a thousand prisoners in our hall. [...] Here were thirteen beasts of us over half a thousand other beasts. It was living hell, that prison, and it was up to us thirteen there to rule. It was impossible, considering the nature of the beasts, for us to rule by kindness. We ruled by fear.”

London described the violence of the hall-men as “unthinkable,” from the “awful abysses of human degradation” (ibid. 54). Because the rest of the prisoners had it out for them, they “could not permit the slightest infraction of rules [or] insolence,” because if they did, they “were lost”: “Our own rule was to hit a man as soon as he opened his mouth — hit him hard, hit him with anything. A broom-handle, end-on, in the face, had a very sobering effect” (ibid.). Like with the AB, acts of violence were meant to be demonstrative (ibid.):

“Such [a] man had to be made an example of; so the next rule was to [...] follow him up. Of course, one was sure that every hall-man in sight would come on the run to join in the chastisement; for this was also a rule. Whenever any hall-man was in trouble with a prisoner, the duty of any other hall-man who happened to be around was to lend a fist. Never mind the merits of the case — wade in and hit [...] with anything; in short, lay the man out.”

For London, a most brutal display of hall-man violence was when a “handsome young mulatto of about twenty” who stood up for his rights — and was justified to do so — was pushed down five

flights of steel stairs, shredding his clothing and “leaving him wholly naked and streaming blood from every portion of the surface of his body,” after which he exhaled a deeply-disturbing cry of pain (ibid. 55). Though the mostly (if not all) white hall-men assaulted a mulatto, this type of violence is *not* tribal: it is inter-inmate violence meant to sustain control of prison rackets (inasmuch as the hall-men are not considered a tribe on the basis of a tenuous loyalty).

2.3.4. On Economism

Violence which functions in the name of protecting profit-based practices — instead of, say, a gang’s tribal code — is a result of the general predicament of the prison world and its deprivations, wherein prisoners “attempt to obtain material comforts such as food, alcohol, drugs, money, clothing, work assignments, and sex in order to counteract the deprivations of imprisonment” with most “of these items [being] contraband in prison” (Gillespie 2003: 58). They are thus only available via the machinations of entrepreneurial inmates and gangs, oftentimes run like *corporations* with various departments. For example, the AB ‘had evolved to the point that it had to appoint members to lead different branches of its operations — such as the “department of security” and the “department of narcotics” ’ (Grann 2004: 169). In this context, though the AB’s “profits never rivalled those of the Italian Mafia or outside drug lords, its reputation for violence did. The gang had some of the most highly trained and ruthless hit men in the country. And inside the prison system [its high commissioners] had so grown in stature that [they] overshadowed the imprisoned head of the Italian Mafia” (ibid.).

In the prison world, the conflict which arises from “the pursuit of (il)licit goods” — what on the outside is called “commerce,” and on the inside “hustle” — cannot be settled by a legally-constituted authority (Gillespie 2003: 59). Therefore, informal processes of “litigation” are needed: “illicit inmate organization must then devise its own ways of securing justice, revenge, discipline, the collection of debts, and the enforcement of contracts. These informal means often involve violence or the threat of violence” (ibid.).

In its ideal form, prison world racketeering is rooted in prison *economism* (the idea that everything in the prison world is determined by economic causes): contract and debt enforcement, corporate management, empire-building, grafting, mafioso-style gangsterism, the

pursuit of power, violence, etc. And there are more features characterising the racketeering component of the prison world. For example, Grann noted that one of the reasons there were “no definitive statistics on A.B. crimes” — why so few of them were prosecuted — was “because so many associates from other gangs, including the Dirty White Boys and the Mexican Mafia, did its bidding” (2004: 167). This type of inter-tribal *subcontracting* exceeds gang on one hand, and both gang *and* race on the other. When subcontracting is used for violent acts — such as in the AB’s use of peckerwoods to perform hits (ibid. 166-167) — it turns into a kind of *mercenary paramilitarism*, the hiring of “private armies” or the like.

Though prison world racketeering is most often characterised negatively — in terms of *criminality* as such, of illicit transactions and subterranean economics with only harmful consequences — it does not necessarily have to be so. In discussing the communication graft in Erie County Penitentiary, for instance, London noted that beyond “service for profit” hall-men “were at times not above giving service for love” (1998b: 56). In a hypothetical scenario where service and love come into conflict — perhaps between members of the hall-men “enterprise” — one could here speak of an intra-racketeering conflict.

2.4. On Administration

2.4.1. On Bureaucracy

Whether concerning tribalism or racketeering, prison world *officials* are in either case dealing with the practices of the “residential community” of their respective prison worlds (Gillespie 2003: 38). In Goffman’s theory the “element common” to all total institutions was “the handling of human needs by the bureaucratic organization en masse” (ibid.). Total institutions are part community, but also part “formal organization” (thus making of them “social hybrids”) (ibid.). Formal *bureaucracy* — a system of official, representative *authorities*, *policies*, and *procedures* — is central to the third major macro antecedent of the prison world: *administration*. According to Gillespie, Goffman “used the method of the ideal type to discern characteristics common to total institutions,” qualities which vary “in the extent to which they apply to the different institutional forms” (in our case the concrete settings of particular prison worlds) (ibid.). Or put

another way: “These characteristics are not common to any one type of total institution,” but depend upon the specificity of the context or situation (ibid.).

At their most bareboned, total institutions are characterised by a “basic split” between two main social groups: *inmates* (“a large managed group”) and “a small supervisory staff” (ibid.). Inmates spend their daily lives inside the total institution, and “social mobility” between the two groups is “grossly restricted” (“social distance is typically great and often formally prescribed”) (ibid.). Goffman enumerated four *qualities* of total institutions (in ibid.):

“First, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority. Second, each phase of the member’s daily activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together. Third, all phases of the day’s activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials. Finally, the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution.”

Total institutions are thus characterised by — amongst other things — authority, *daily activity* or *practices, scheduling*, explicit and formal *rulings* and *bodies*, a *rational plan* and *official aim(s)*, and a general atmosphere of *control, permission, prearrangement, sanction*, and so on.

The *organisation* of prison world administration — especially in the Big House — adheres to all the traits of the administration found in total institutions. Prison staff or *personnel* include the guards/warders and the warden, amongst other *agents*. Irwin has described the life inside of the Big House, one which “involved isolation and monotony” with *routine* and pattern being its mainstays (in ibid. 37):

“Prisoners rose early; hurriedly ate breakfast; returned to their cells for one of the four or five daily counts; proceeded to work, school, or the yard for a day of idleness; hurriedly ate lunch; counted; went back to work, school, or idleness; hurriedly ate dinner; and returned to their cells for the night.”

Only “social elements” of the evenings or weekends — predominantly the *licensed* ones — such as writing letters, talking, pursuing hobbies, listening to the radio, sporting events (baseball or boxing), and visits alleviated the all-encompassing “exerted [...] influence” of the Big House as

such (ibid.). Commenting on this *exertion* — the invasive and deprivational nature of prison administration as such — Sykes emphasised the way that, in prisons, “control of the mechanics of daily life is transferred from adults to their custodians” (Steinberg 2004: 13). That is, all aspects of prison life are permeated by a general *attitude of suspicion*, where even the most innocent activity “may be the symptom of a major breach in the institution’s defenses” (in ibid.). On the empirical level, suspicion manifests in the form of all kinds of *precautions* or *strategies*: *censoring* (of — for instance — mail hinting at an escape plan), *counts* (to ensure each inmate is in their appointed place and all implements are accounted for), *inspections* (of escape routes: bars, windows, gratings, others), *searches* (for contraband material), and so on (in ibid.).

2.4.2. On Orientation

A defining feature of prison world administration is its *orientation* (organisational aim or goal). In general, orientations have been posited as coming in two forms: *custody* as opposed to *treatment* (Gillespie 2003: 54). In custody-oriented prisons, there is no pretense of humanisation (the style of the prison is severe and emphasises *punishment*), while within treatment-oriented prisons attitudes towards inmates are constructive and positive, offering *programs* promoting therapy and attempting to build non-antagonistic and “prosocial” feelings between staff and prisoners in order to facilitate a rehabilitative *agenda* (ibid. 55-56). Generally, orientations are linked with the *custody level* of prisons: maximum-security prisons usually orient towards custody, while medium- and minimum-security prisons orient towards treatment (ibid. 56).

From an outsider’s perspective, prisons have a function in the wider context (of which earlier were noted four). From an insider’s perspective, prisons have an orientation (of which so far were noted two). As with function, the proper orientation of the prison has been historically debated. In the third-century Roman Empire, the jurist Ulpian uttered a maxim which “resonated through many centuries and came to be understood (erroneously) as the sole doctrine of imprisonment in Roman law” (Peters 1995: 21):

“Governors are in the habit of condemning men to be kept in prison or in chains, but they ought not to do this, for punishments of this type are forbidden. Prison indeed ought to be employed for confining men, not for punishing them.”

Ignoring the functional aspect, in terms of orientation prisons were (ideally) meant as jails, or places of confinement — incapacitation, holding, etc. — and not places of, say, torture, as was the actual case of many ancient Athenian prisons, or execution, as was the case with many ancient Roman prisons and Athenian ones (such as the prison of Socrates) (see *ibid.* 6-7, 19-20). The orientation of the prison — whether custodial-punitive or treatment-confinement⁵⁴ — is necessarily reflected in the prison world's administration.

The orientation of the prison world is linked to the principle of normalization, an idea which “has been implemented in varied forms and degrees, in chronic tension with less eligibility and within the limits variably set by security concerns” (Cunha 2014: 221-222). A prison adhering to this *principle* — which may be applied “at the level of individual prisoners” (where it “can consist in maintaining prisoners’ previous [personal and social] identities rather than replacing them with a number or a prison uniform”) or “at the level of the institution and the services available” (where “it consists in sustaining, rather than reducing, access to education, health, and training, as well as other aspects such as intimate conjugal visits or voting rights”) — will obviously be fundamentally different from one emphasising the deprivations of the less eligibility approach⁵⁵ (*ibid.*).

On the level of intra-administration, orientations may also come into conflict with one another. This is clearly visible in South Africa’s gang-dominated Pollsmoor Prison of the early 2000s, notably in the agenda of daily staff meetings (Steinberg 2004: 52-53). The latter would begin with a prayer and a speech by a senior official encouraging “staff to understand the principles of rehabilitation, to treat inmates with humanity, to understand their individual problems and concerns, [and] that their overarching goal was to shore up the human soul that resided within each inmate” (an official slogan was: “Each member a rehabilitator”) (*ibid.*). However, ‘when the daily meetings got down to business, discussion would usually turn to questions of control and safety: restricting movement between the sections of the prisons, taking

⁵⁴ These categories are not quite commensurable, but a comprehensive typologisation will not be pursued here.

⁵⁵ A related question would concern the effect that the *privatisation* of prisons has on prison administration, something not done here. Already in thirteenth-century England there emerged the notion of “franchisal prisons” wherein prisoners were given or sold “to a person who derived an income from the difference between money spent maintaining the prison and the prisoners and money received for their upkeep” (Peters 1995: 35).

a troublesome inmate out of a food team, plugging a “hole” that had allowed gang leaders in one section to recruit new members in another’ (ibid. 53). In Pollsmoor, there was thus a gap between “the prison’s official discourse [and] the immediate and practical concerns of its staff” (between ideals and “dirty work”) (ibid.).

Within prison management and culture in general, the goals of custody — maintaining order and security, controlling movement (or possessions, or implements, or whatever), doing strip-searches — and treatment (fostering adult autonomy, rehabilitating inmates) necessarily enter into conflict one with another: “The very management of a prison is constantly at odds with its goal of rehabilitation” (ibid. 50-56). In the severely-overcrowded “Pollsmoor Admission Centre, this tension is particularly acute, its manifestations vivid” (ibid.):

“Many of the communal cells, designed to house 18 inmates, housed 40 or 50. Needless to say, privacy was the scarcest resource in the prison. Day in and day out, inmates lived in one another’s lives. Even more troubling, the imperatives of controlling an overcrowded prison meant that warders were in no position to alleviate the cramped, claustrophobic conditions in the jail. Inmates were locked in their cells between 4pm and 7am every day. Although inmates were supposed to spend an hour a day in the exercise yard, most were lucky to get an hour a week. This was not the result of malevolence on the part of staff. The prison was simply so crowded that staff could not both maintain control and give each inmate an hour of daily exercise. Inmates were forced to spend most of each day idle, in cramped quarters, because the exigencies of control did not permit otherwise. The task of treating inmates with humanity and controlling them clashed every hour of every day. Inevitably, the exigencies of the latter must win out in the end. In this context, talk of rehabilitation as a primary goal smacked of madness for many warders — it simply did not make sense in the context of the reality of their day-to-day work.”

A central question of prison world administration (and the prison’s “keepers” as such) is thus how to balance an appropriate and necessary amount of “antagonism” (custody) with humanisation *techniques* (treatment) towards inmates. That the reality of the prison world is fundamentally altered by this balance is made evident by Donald Lowrie’s memoirs written in the first two decades of the twentieth century, wherein he described the role of the new warden at San Quentin (a place of endemic torture) (Franklin 1998a: 9). Historically, every night of December 31st — New Year’s Eve as such — San Quentin inmates waited up until midnight to cause a “contagious” “pandemonium” or “lawless outbreak” (Lowrie 1998: 58-60). That is, the prison’s inmates (“outcasts” and “pariahs”) — even those usually calm and quiet — would

unleash a stream of vigorous shrieks (cursing) wherein all “the repression, all the hate, all the despair of the year was suddenly released and poured forth in a torrent that made fear clutch at the heart” (ibid.). Aided by the cacophony of band instruments such as bass drums, bed slats, buckets, cans, heavy brogans, stools, wash basins, and other objects, the outburst was so predictable inhabitants of the nearby village would assemble on the hilltop to listen to it (ibid.).

Attempts to stop the demonstration by other wardens — polite requests, the posting of guards by the cells, warnings that all privileges would be suspended in the new year, even the use of fire hoses shot directly into cells or the debate as to whether or not to sedate the inmate population — were only like “waving a red flag at an angry bull” (ibid. 60-61). But in 1907, the new, young warden managed to tame this tradition, and “so placed a period at the end of decades of misunderstanding between prisoners and their keepers” by fomenting a new “attitude of respect” (ibid.). This was achieved through a “call on honour”: “He had simply had notices distributed in the cells and dormitories asking each prisoner to refrain from making any noise at midnight, and stating that he hoped they would feel that the request was made in good faith, and that he felt confident each one would respond to it” (ibid. 61). And indeed, they did (ibid.):

“Well, a week before, on Christmas Eve, the Warden had come inside the prison and had been much surprised to see socks hanging from nearly every wicket. It had been an amusement for the old-time prison officers to see socks hung out on Christmas Eve, but to [the] Warden [...] it was something more than amusing. He promptly sent an officer [who] bought every bit of confection and fruit in the town; and when the officer got back with his load it was distributed in the socks at midnight. Next morning when the prisoners awoke and found that they had at last been remembered it struck deeply. It was not the first instance of the new Warden’s humanitarianism, but it made a deeper impression than anything else he had done. Some may call it sentiment — perhaps it was — but it did not prove so a week later on New Year’s Eve [or any] New Year’s Eve since[.]”

2.4.3. On Some Administrative Features

Administrative aspects of the prison world are often spoken of in a vague, more or less defined — and referentially more or less specific — vocabulary, a set of terms pertaining to phenomena existing at many different levels: agenda, agent, orientation, policy, practice, principle, procedure, program, rule, strategy, technique, etc. Gillespie has also consolidated the ideas of various authors to present a varied list of examples of administrative features: attitudinal differences (levels of positivity or negativity towards prisoners), allocation of available

resources, classification policy, degradations, distribution of decision-making power, experimentation, lines of communication, list of facilities, means by which organisational participants other than inmates are evaluated, organisational dimensions, organisational structure, orientation, particular organisational goals of the correctional institution, policy on freedom of outside contact for inmates, prison programs, ratios and quality of personnel, rigid organisational hierarchy, routinisation of organisational activities, use of inmate labour, and the general “related characteristics and activities and characteristics of the organisation” (2003: 54-56).

Some of these examples may be elucidated. Regarding “policy on freedom of outside contact for inmates” London noted that during his imprisonment he was ‘*incomunicado* so far as the outside world was concerned. I tried to write a letter out, but I learned that all letters were read, and censored or confiscated, by the prison authorities, and that “short-timers” were not allowed to write letters anyway. A little later I tried smuggling letters out by men who were released, but I learned that they were searched and the letters found and destroyed’ (1998a: 48-49). Regarding “available resources” (as well as their allocation) the presence or absence of education programs in prisons has already been noted by Wicker, and Hamm has also pointed out that radicalisation in prisons usually occurs when these prisons lack qualified “chaplains” able to offer religious guidance and teach inmates “moderation and tolerance,” or else help officials differentiate radical from moderate Islam⁵⁶ (2007a: 23; 2007b: 6-7). And regarding the “use of inmate labour” Morris and Rothman have listed examples of prison worlds where the latter has predominated: ancient mines and quarries, pre-Civil War southern plantations, the Soviet Gulag, Nazi concentration camps, and contemporary Chinese factories and labour camps (1995: xi-xii).

There are other examples as well. For instance, Jacobs pointed out that in jungle prisons — where white inmates are often targets for abuse — a common way of administering prison affairs is by using the *social control mechanism* of “protective custody,” wherein vulnerable inmates (not necessarily white) are protected by being assigned to “twenty-four-hour-a-day confinement in special tiers” (1979: 24). Meanwhile, Cunha saw the prison as a concrete

⁵⁶ Hamm posits that radicalisation is more likely to occur in a maximum-security prison where deprivations are increased via fewer “rehabilitation programs,” “scarce resources and programs,” and “stringent control mechanisms,” as opposed to lower-custody prisons with “fewer controls” and “more leisure time activities” (2007a: 9; 2007b: 5).

instantiation of *managerialism* and its main features, as well as a site where different levels of *regime* — “modes of regulation,” “normative order,” policies, procedures, programs, etc. — both consistent and contradictory (as in economic as opposed to moral dimensions) are made manifest in the prison’s “everyday activities,” agents and practices: daily rules, frontline personnel (including their moralities, occupational cultures, subjectivities, and vocational constraints), interactions and social relations (based on institutional authority and power), routines (such as timetables), etc. (2014: 219, 221, 222). She also emphasised that the prison experience is determined by the prison regime’s policy towards both *surveillance* and *work* (ibid. 220). Cunha also spoke of prison *rationales* (ibid. 219-220):

“Changing general trends can be identified in penal institutions, but they do not necessarily indicated a unified and coherent rationale. The focus on existing practices and daily routines can reveal composite layers from different penal eras. Postmodern prison programs can coexist with old modernist classifications and disciplinaries, alongside premodern modes of control such as body searches, physical coercion, and neo-feudal acts of punishment such as deportation, public humiliation, and shaming procedures.”

Another feature of prison world administration concerns the “personal styles and idiosyncrasies” of “prison governors” (ibid. 222), or “the character and predilections of senior personnel” (Steinberg 2004: 51). For example — like the warden Lowrie described — in Pollsmoor in 1997 a new reform-minded warden took over the prison and successfully implemented new policies which radically changed warder-inmate relations; Steinberg noted that perhaps “his success simply lies in the fact that he brought a modicum of sanity, intelligence and a great deal of personal courage to the running of an institution that had long been crazy” (ibid. 50-56). On the other end, one sees the evil warden or prison guard as a popular trope.

Oftentimes governors have say in prison-house *implementations*. For example, the new warden at Pollsmoor implemented ideas proposed by non-governmental organisations and established a “series of workshops [...] on conflict management, life skills and personal development” within the prison (ibid.). On the opposite side of this type of charitable importation, prison world administrators in certain women’s prisons have dipped into a new “global market of penal products” called *reintegration industries* (Cunha 2014: 220). These are

commodified treatment programs “in the form of in-prison cognitive-behavioral programs” which are “[f]ueled by the revival of psychological perspectives on crime and oblivious to [micro antecedents such as] adverse backgrounds or severe social situations faced by prisoners” (ibid.). These “programs aim to reduce recidivism by redefining prisoners’ predicaments as psychological problems in need of cognitive adjustment” (Cunha 2014: 220). At a speculative extreme, one is again reminded of science fiction-esque *reorientation*: brainwashing, the forced ingestion of psychotropic drugs, sedatives, or vaccinations, the Ludovici technique, torture, etc.

2.4.4. On the Rules and Regulations of Alcatraz

Prison world administration in general concerns itself with not only these features, but with many others not mentioned: guidelines, industry, in-prison courts or forensics or investigations, logistics, medical treatment, processing and registration, and so on *ad infinitum*. The variability of features subsumed under the category of administration may be revealed by examining an administrative document of the prison world *par excellence*: the 1956 “Institution Rules & Regulations” of United States Penitentiary Alcatraz. This twenty-page document is a prime example of administrative totality; it contains explicitly-detailed descriptions of the control and exertion inherent to Alcatraz. For instance: an inmate’s *good time* — whether industrial, meritorious, or statutory — is measured by *good conduct* and *good work record* (the ability to obey orders), and may be forfeited, withheld, or restored. Anything other than *entitlements* — food, shelter, medical attention, and clothing — are considered *privileges*. Inmates are to be addressed by their surnames (or *committed names*) only, or else identified by their *register number*. Disciplinary action may take the form of a disciplinary (as opposed to a commendatory) report, and in-prison crimes are clearly enumerated: those pertaining to employees (attempting to bribe, threatening, intimidating, even ridiculing them) and those to general misconduct (loafing or loitering from work, contraband, trading, selling, or loaning government-issue items or services, etc.). Moreover, weekday and weekend routines are highly formalised.

There are explicit comments pertaining to even the most minute aspects of prison life: auditorium rules for film-watching, bathing and bathroom and cellhouse and laundry rules, dining room rules, how to file constructive suggestions or legitimate complaints, good time

legislation, how to apply for interviews via interview request slips, legal work, library rules (pertaining to books and magazines, catalogs and subscriptions), mail box (including who inmates are allowed to address without the letter being inspected), medical attention, money and prisoners' trust funds, movement in the prison, music and radio rules, policies on classification and parole and education and social matters, recommendations for clemency, recreation, religious services, special purchases, tobacco and smoking regulations, transfers, treatment units, visits, work and work regulations, yard privileges, etc. Even haircut and shave regulations were *micro-managed*: an inmate is "not permitted to wear [their] hair in an unusual manner or have any special haircut except as authorized by the Associate Warden."

2.5. On Architecture

2.5.1. On Materiality and Physicality

The fourth major macro antecedent of the prison world is one that generally dominates its conception or archetype: *architecture*. In many of the sources thus far analysed, the architectural component has remained implicit. For example, Morris and Rothman were hit by the "massive quality of the buildings, with their walls and turrets jutting out of the landscape and visible over distances, convey[ing] immutability" (1998: vii). And here is how London described one of the *halls* he was first processed into, scrunched between various steel doors or gates (1998a: 44):

'A "hall" is not a corridor. Imagine an oblong cube, built out of bricks and rising six stories high, each story a row of cells, say fifty cells in a row — in short, imagine a cube of colossal honey-comb. Place this cube on the ground and enclose it in a building with a roof overhead and walls all around. Such a cube and encompassing building constitute a "hall" in the Erie County Penitentiary. Also, to complete the picture, see a narrow gallery, with steel railing, running the full length of each tier of cells and at the ends of the oblong cube see all these galleries, from both sides, connected by a fire escape system of narrow steel stairways.'

Here is Irwin's description of the architecture of the Big House (in Gillespie 2003: 36-37):

"The Big House was a walled prison with large cell blocks that contained stacks of three or more tiers of one- or two-man cells. On average, it held 2,500 men. Sometimes a single cell block housed over 1,000 prisoners in six tiers of cells."

Prison architecture is characterised by all sorts of *angles* and *shapes*, and of course its *capacity*, *physicality*, and *size*. Meanwhile, the *materiality* of the Big House was summed up by Irwin as a “granite, steel, cement, and asphalt monstrosity” with its cells described as follows (in *ibid.* 37):

“Their cells had toilets and small sinks, and they were ventilated, heated, clean, and slightly more spacious. In many Big Houses, convicts were permitted to add furnishings, and decorations to their cells, and many cells had rugs on the floor; paintings on the walls, and other pieces of furniture that fit into the small space between the bunks of the cell wall.”

The (synchronic) diversity of prisons and their architectures can be made clear by juxtaposing the northern American Big House with a southern plantation prison of the same era. For instance, in the very early twentieth century a South Carolina reporter transcribed the oral autobiography of a former debt peon who had lived for years in a prison that a plantation governor had ordered built on his property. Called the *stockade*, it was described thusly (1998: 24):

“[T]he Senator had a long, low shanty built [with a] great big chimney [and] wide, open fireplace [...] built at one end of it, and on each side of the house, running length-wise, there was a row of frames of stalls just large enough to hold a single mattress. The places for these mattresses were fixed one above the other; so that there was a double row of these stalls or pens on each side.”

The former slave further commented that “the stockades were but little more than cow lots, horse stables or hog pens,” and also compared this “convict camp” to the “caboosees [...] similarly arranged as sleeping quarters for railroad laborers” (*ibid.* 24, 27):

“The stockades in which we slept were, I believe, the filthiest places in the world. They were cesspools of nastiness. During the thirteen years that I was there I am willing to swear that a mattress was never moved after it had been brought there, except to turn it over once or twice a month. No sheets were used, only dark-colored blankets. Most of the men slept every night in the clothing that they had worked in all day. Some of the worst characters were made to sleep in chains. The doors were locked and barred each night, and tallow candles were the only lights allowed.”

The emphasis on the materiality of prison worlds goes back to the earliest days of prisons: ancient Egyptian prisons were said to resemble fortresses with cells and dungeons and the prison of Socrates was a cave-like subterranean chamber (Peters 1995: 6, 9). One may also think of the

Tower of London or the many exapted prisons of the Middle Ages. But the Roman *latumiae* — and the overwhelming dominance of their “stoneness” — are exemplary in this regard (ibid. 19):

‘The latumiae were part of a prison complex located on the southern slope of the Capitoline hill, where rock had once been quarried. They were adjacent to the underground chamber called the Tullianum, later called the carcer Mamertinus, the Mamertine prison. [A] [...] historian [...] described the chamber: “In the prison ... there is a place [...] about twelve feet below the surface of the ground. It is enclosed on all sides by walls, and above it is a chamber with a vaulted roof of stone. Neglect, darkness, and stench make it hideous and fearsome to behold.” ’

2.5.2. On Architectural Epiphenomena and Related Phenomena

Describing prison world architecture is not so straightforward. Beyond simply elucidating material *substances* or the imposing physicalities and/or *enclosures*, all accounts of prison architecture necessarily comment on architectural *epiphenomena*. Already from the above quotations we may enumerate some of these: lack of spaciousness caused by overcrowding, cleanliness or filth, darkness, and stench. These are phenomena which are not directly architectural as such, but which are *necessarily determined* by architecture and are thus subsumed under its category as a component. For example: though darkness, filthiness, overcrowding, or stench do not (necessarily) emanate from the materiality of stone walls, the enclosing nature of these walls — and the *space* afforded by the room created by these walls — determines the presence of the latter phenomena. The materiality, physicality, or substantiality of architecture — as well as features such as angle, capacity, *form*, shape, size, etc. — thus connect with things like *arrangement*, *configuration*, *design*, *spatial organisation*, and so on. In this context, ventilation, heating, or durability and resistance to neglect are also architectural in the sense that they are either *pre-planned* aspects of architecture, or epiphenomena determined by it.

Any articles or writings pertaining to the prison world — even to its other components — always necessarily comment on aspects of prison world architecture. For instance, in overlooking the AB tribe Grann still needed to describe maximum-security Pelican Bay as “a colossal compound, a maze of buildings surrounded by swirling razor wire and an electrified fence that was lethal to the touch,” also characterised by towers, long corridors lined with surveillance cameras, *fortified* cellblocks, and ten-by-twelve windowless cement cells, and other prisons with regards to their steel doors and gates, tray slots in cell doors, and the “scuffed

plastic” of a “three-by-three bulleproof window cut into the wall” (2004: 157, 162). Other articles focus explicitly on the architectural component. The cells of Pelican Bay were described by Fowler as “8x10-foot, soundproof, poured-concrete cells with remote controlled doors and no windows,” designs described as “appalling living conditions” (2015: 373). Here a living *condition* is also an epiphenomenon of “classic” architecture — bars, concrete, doors, footage, gates, gratings, roofs, walls, windows, etc. — while soundproofing could be epiphenomenal dependent on the (un)consciousness of its design (whether it was *meant* to be soundproof, or whether this was *unplanned*). Peters’ description of the Roman prison at Alba Fucens contains many examples of epiphenomena (darkness, noise, stench) (1995: 19):

“The prison is a deep underground dungeon, no larger than [a dining-room {for} nine], dark and noisome from the large numbers [of people] committed to the place[.] With so many shut up in such close quarters, the poor wretches were reduced to the appearance of brutes, and since their food and everything pertaining to their other needs was all so foully commingled, a stench so terrible assailed anyone who drew near it that could scarcely be endured.”

Other than epiphenomena, descriptions of prison world architecture also usually elucidate *related phenomena*. Already many of these have been described or hinted at: books, blankets, candles, chains, clothing, film-showing equipment, furnishings, furniture, decorations, mattresses, radios, rifles, sinks, sheets, surveillance cameras, toilets, tubs, the objects used by the inmates of San Quentin to produce cacophony, etc. That is, these are *accessories* — equipment, items, miscellany, olio, things, etc. — not generally considered architectural, but which are to be subsumed under the architectural component inasmuch as they are *manufactured* and material aspects belonging the prison world. “Architecture” includes the batons carried by warders in Pollsmoor (Steinberg 2004: 51), the flashlights used by guards in San Quentin (Grann 2004: 157), or the straitjackets used in early twentieth-century San Quentin (Franklin 1998b: 57).

Prison world architecture subsumes the light fixtures and radio parts used by inmates to make shanks, as well as the mattresses, air vents, and drain pipes they hide them in, the bedsheets they braid into garrots and nooses, or the flip-flops and shoes they are assigned (Grann 2004: 158, 163). It subsumes anything *infrastructural*: communications, electrification and electricity, electronic control systems, gas lines, heating, information technology, plumbing

(water and sewage and piping), roads, ventilation, etc. Prison architecture is anything *engineered* or *topographic* or *topological*, or which determines *ergonomics* or *proxemics*. Understood in the wide sense, it is all of buildings, chairs or tables (steel, wood, etc.), computers, handcuffs and handcuff keys, jumpsuits or uniforms of all colours (both staff and inmate), machinery, paintings, pepper spray, rugs, shackles, technologies, telegraph wires, towers and other structures, restraints, vehicles, and so on.

The category of architecture could even be extended to include the *food* and *foodstuffs* of the prison world. For instance, here is how London described his prison meals (1998b: 50):

'[T]here was one vital defect in [our] bread-and-water diet. While we got plenty of water, we did not get enough of the bread. A ration of bread was about the size of one's two fists, and three rations a day were given to each prisoner. There was one good thing, I must say, about the water — it was hot. In the morning it was called "coffee," at noon it was dignified as "soup," and at night it masqueraded as "tea." But it was the same old water all the time. The prisoners called it "water bewitched." In the morning it was black water, the color being due to boiling it with burnt bread-crusts. At noon it was served minus the color, with salt and a drop of grease added. At night it was served with a purplish-auburn hue that defied all speculation; it was darn poor tea, but it was dandy hot water.'

2.5.3. On the Natural World

The notion of prison "architecture" can be also be expanded in other ways. For example: AB members locked in supermax prisons complained that not only would they exercise alone in indoor cages, be fed meals through tray slots, and have little — if any — human contact, they were also denied access to "seeing fresh earth, plant life, or unfiltered sunlight" (Grann 2004: 168). Another of their high-ranking members, meanwhile, lost his eye after a black-widow spider bit it in San Quentin (ibid. 160). Finally, the Leavenworth prison taken over by the AB is known as "the Hot House" because of its "sweltering, catacomb-like cells" which blaze in the summer months (ibid. 165). All of these examples pertain to prison world architecture entering into contact with aspects of the *natural world*, the latter thus becoming a part of the prison world as such (the Hot House, for example, is produced by inadequate ventilation combining with the temperatures of the summertime).

In Pollsmoor warders patrolled corridors with attack dogs (Steinberg 2004: 51); on plantations, armed guards marched with bloodhounds (unknown 1998: 24-25). Moreover, since

the entire physical *grounds* of plantations were guarded, in a sense the plantation proper — and not just its stockade — can be seen as a prison (with the stockade a kind of “prison within the prison”), just like the entire island of Alcatraz may be seen as a prison. The same holds for a place like the supermax prison ADX Florence — “the Alcatraz of the Rockies” — encircled by snow-covered ravines (Grann 2004: 157), or even Tallinn’s Patarei prison and its sealine, or San Quentin, from where — ever since New Year’s Eve 1907 — “the whistles and bells at San Francisco, San Rafael and from the Contra Costa shore have merely served to lull the inmates of San Quentin into deeper sleep” (Lowrie 1998: 61). In fact, the relation between prison worlds and natural worlds was already built into Goffman’s conception of the total institution, where he noted that the latter were “symbolized by the barrier to social intercourse with the outside and to departure that is often built right into the physical plant, such as locked doors, high walls, barbed wire, cliffs, water, forests, or moors” (in Gillespie 2003: 38).

Relatedly, London has described how one of his cellmates “used to trap sparrows that flew into our hall through the open bars” whereafter he would be seen “crunching bones and spitting out feathers as he bolted it raw” (1998b: 53). Upon his arrival at Erie County, London also describes his experience with the prison’s vermin:

“My [first] cell-mate had discovered that our cell was alive with bed-bugs. In all the cracks and interstices between the bricks where the mortar had fallen out flourished great colonies. The natives even ventured out in the broad daylight and swarmed over the walls and ceiling by hundreds. My cell-mate was wise in the way of the beasts. [...] Never was there such a battle. It lasted for hours. It was shambles. And when the last survivors fled to their brick-and-mortar fastnesses, our work was only half done. We chewed mouthfuls of our bread until it was reduced to the consistency of putty. When a fleeing belligerent escaped into a crevice between the bricks, we promptly walled him in with a daub of the chewed bread. We toiled on until the light grew dim and until every hole, nook, and cranny was closed. I shudder to think of the tragedies of starvation and cannibalism that must have ensued behind those bread-plastered ramparts.”

Finally, Fowler noted the non-hygienic or “unhealthy conditions” of the first prison of the Auburn system, which “immediately encountered multiple problems concerning the living conditions of the cells [including] inadequate heating, dampness, rodents, and a high level of [...] illness amongst the prisoners confined to the tiny spaces (seven feet six inches by three feet eight inches and seven feet high)” (2015: 374).

On the basis of all of the above, prison world architecture may now be understood as subsuming all of “classic” phenomena, epiphenomena, and related phenomena, as well as phenomena of the natural world such as *physical forces* and *non-human biological organisms*. This includes anything from bed-bugs to bloodhounds and rodents (and all other animals, insects, spiders, etc.), to the cold and damp, to muggy air and build-ups of dust, and even the prison-house bacteria and viruses at the root of illnesses. “Architecture” includes the sea, the rain or the snow, the sights and the sounds and the smells, the sun⁵⁷, and other natural phenomena manifest in the prison. Finally, an example of intra-architecture conflict could be the natural disintegration of architecture caused by neglect and the passage of time.

2.5.4. On Ecological Processes

While other components of the prison world usually entail social processes, as seen earlier, the “physical environment” (architecture as such) entails “ecological” processes (which were said to cause cognitive and other impairments). One of these ecological processes could be understood as the creation of a new “disciplined” consciousness (Fowler 2015: 375):

‘In describing the Panopticon, Foucault emphasizes that each person is alone and constantly visible, which reverses the concept of the dungeon where prisoners are enclosed, deprived of light, and hidden. The Panopticon scheme, with its central beam of light illuminating each prisoner, holds true only to the principle of enclosure. Foucault states that this “visibility is a trap” and that because the prisoners are “seen but cannot see” their supervisor, there is a guarantee of order. Because the power is visible yet unverifiable, the Panopticon automatizes and dis-individualizes power to the effect of inducing in an inmate a state of consciousness and permanent visibility that Foucault states as the major effect of the Panopticon.’

So while a dungeon might cause sensory deprivation⁵⁸ or temporal disorientation, the Panopticon might instill a certain “nervousness” into the inmate. These are examples of two different “becomings” brought about by different prison world ecologies. In Fowler’s view, criticism of prison architecture design is valid on the basis that it ignores the *human experience* or *human factor* (ibid. 374). She further noted that many architects refuse to use the term “architecture” for

⁵⁷ Which is why Grann could describe a prison visiting area as “a brightly-lit room” (2004: 162).

⁵⁸ Leading to what is sometimes called “prisoner’s cinema.”

prisons on the basis of ethical considerations, because these are considered negative spaces with harmful impact on the human morale, psyche, soul, or spirit (ibid. 373-380). This holds even in the post-Enlightenment days, after which “prisons took distinct forms meant to solve the problems and behavior of the inmates, signaling the beginning of self-conscious prison architecture” (ibid.). This included Jeremy Bentham’s “revolutionary scheme” for the “all-seeing” Panopticon, based on a *configuration* “around a guard tower from which a supervisor could maintain constant surveillance of all prisoners while himself being shielded by a beam of directional light” (ibid.). This design inspired “considerable theory as well as physical solutions for prison architecture with centralized planning,” including the two American systems (ibid.):

‘[Pennsylvania system] prison designs often recall the Panopticon with centralized configurations [but] it was at Auburn where the core idea of total surveillance from Bentham’s Panopticon became a reality. The Auburn system and corresponding architecture have been described as “machine-like” where prisoners are kept in tiny cells under total control. Since the 19th century, the Auburn system has predominated prison design and theory.’

Writing in a moral normative language game, Fowler saw the need to improve prison architecture — mitigating inhumanity and cruelty — as an attempt at becoming more efficient in rehabilitating the minds and souls of individuals (Fowler 2015: 376-380). Instead of “blind serving lines” in cafeterias (twelve-foot stainless steel walls), or razor wire fences, or televisions where channels cannot be changed manually and thus contribute to “a mass of men standing in front of televisions,” prisons must be designed to minimise insanity and danger; instead of being reactive and negative, design must be proactive and positive (ibid 377). In general, American prison design is seen as creating opportunities for violence, hostility and tension, stress-related health issues in both prisoners as well as employees, and so on (ibid. 373-380).

Gillespie has discussed the ecological processes pertaining to the epiphenomenon of overcrowding, wherein “ecological factors” of the physical *layout* (“the physical structure of the institution”) determine “lack of privacy, warehousing, crowding” and lead to situations of emotional, physical, physiological, sensorial, and eventually *social*, disturbances (2003: 54, 56). Studies in prison crowding have revealed that it is generally connected “with several types of pathologies”: “density was significantly correlated with both the number and the rate of

disciplinary reports filed” as well as general “institutional misconduct and recidivism” because overcrowding produces “stress and aggression” not conducive to rehabilitation (ibid.). Prison overcrowding — low space per person, no privacy, constant presence of others — was also associated with “more deaths, suicides, disciplinary infractions, and psychiatric commitments” as well as “complaints of illness” and general negative “psychological reactions⁵⁹” (ibid. 62-63). Overcrowding as such may come in various forms: double cells, large open dormitories, or double-bunking practices. Moreover, the “negative effects of crowding can be reduced by placing privacy cubicles in open dormitories” (ibid. 63).

2.6. On Prison Worlds as Semiospheres

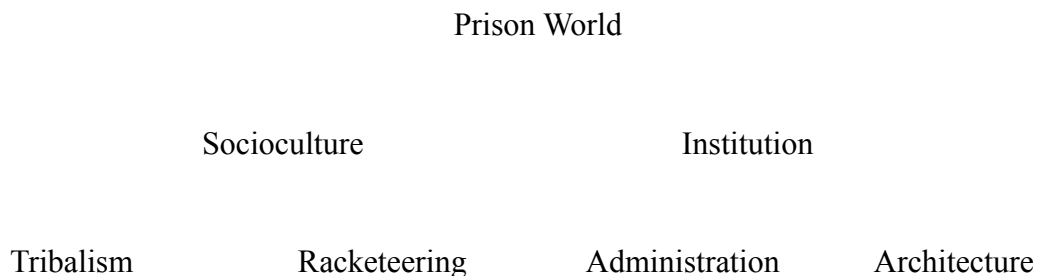
2.6.1. On Relations, Socioculture and Institution, and the Prison World Diagram

So far this thesis has elucidated the four major macro antecedents of the prison world, or the main components of the prison world model. Within the category of each component, this work has also given four main examples of what could be called *intra-relations*: disagreement within the black “tribe” on the basis of degree of politicisation (intra-tribalism), a hypothetical scenario wherein “service for profit” clashes with “service for love” (intra-racketeering), contradiction between custodial and rehabilitative orientations (intra-administration), and the natural decay of architectural structures (intra-architecture). It must be noted that all of these examples of intra-relations have been conflictual, but this need not be so. For example: the manner in which charismatic imams mapped religion onto gang identity is instance of a “harmonious” intra-

⁵⁹ In “response to animal studies that examined population density and social pathology” in the early 1970s, research “examining the effects of crowding on humans began,” often using “experimental condition[s] where the needs of [a] population surpassed its environmental resources” (Gillespie 2003: 61). For example, colonies of rats were overbred in a limited space and as a result of their overcrowding “socially disorganized behaviors such as aggression, mortality, and homosexuality” increased; it is thought crowding “in prison may have similar detrimental effects or even exacerbate the effects of other deprivations” (ibid.). Prisons “offer ideal field locations that allow researchers to examine the effects of crowding” because they “supply a wide variety of housing units and occupants. The different combinations of inmates in housing units allow for variation among measures of spatial and social density [and] the nature of incarceration allows for ample long-term observations. Prison populations are also quite heterogeneous” and biographical “data on subjects [is] accessible [with] volunteer rates [...] typically good” (ibid. 62).

relation (intra-tribalism). Harmonious intra-relations also exist for the other three components. An intra-relation is thus a type of relation occurring *within* the category of a specific component.

Any of the components may also enter into *interrelations* with any of the other components in a multiplicity of manners. An interrelation is a relation *between* different components. When looking at the four major macro antecedents of the prison world, for instance, the following interrelations are possible: tribalism-racketeering, tribalism-administration, tribalism-architecture, racketeering-administration, racketeering-architecture, and administration-architecture. On the basis of which components share similarity and also enter into interrelations the most often, it is possible to further categorise the components as such, and posit two formulas of the prison world: tribalism and racketeering together compose the prison world *socioculture*, and administration and architecture together compose the prison world *institution*. Together, prison world socioculture and institution themselves interrelate and compose the entire prison world as such. The diagram of these relations — the prison world model proper — is as follows:



There is a tenuous logic behind the placement of the four major (sub-)components. Read horizontally, the closer the components are situated to each other spatially, the more likely they are to interrelate. For example, when socioculture and institution “cross-cut” and interrelate, it is usually on the basis of relations between racketeering and administration more so than, say, tribalism and architecture. This logic is tenuous, however, because all components necessarily interrelate in a highly complex and hyper-dynamic *n*-number of ways.

The question of relations is a tricky one, and concerns *hierarchy*: what on one level is an intra-relation is, on another level, an interrelation. For example, administration-architecture is an interrelation but also an institutional intra-relation. Furthermore, the four major components

elucidated in the work are themselves composed of phenomena which may also be called components. Tribalism, for example, could have as (sub-)components features such as totemism or tattooing which could theoretically either harmonise or come into conflict. Even two specific gangs existing in one prison world could be understood as (sub-)components of tribalism. In this case, an *inter*-tribal conflict — such as a battle between a black gang and a white gang — is still part of *intra*-tribalism as such (being an intra-componential conflictual relation). The scenario gets *even more* complex when one considers multivalence, or the possibility that lower-level components may interrelate with higher-level components: racketeering, say, could enter into an interrelation with the institutional as a whole, sans the tribalism that would unify it into socioculture proper. One could then ask: is this the “diagonal” relation racketeering-institution, or a tripartite relation racketeering-administration-architecture (or both)?

Looking at administration-architecture offers specific examples of interrelations. For instance, a prison guard at Marion (who was later murdered by the AB) was described as a “hard-nosed, nineteen-year veteran with military-style gray hair” (Grann 2004: 161). In this case, there is a harmonic “isomorphism” — “analogy,” “homology,” etc. — distinguishable between the “angularity” of prison architecture and the cropped look of a prison guard (shared characteristics between administrator and architecture). It is no coincidence, then, that most AB members prefer the biker aesthetic of handlebar mustaches, hermit-like beards, or hair reaching to their shoulders (this being an example of a conflictual socioculture-institution interrelation) (Grann 2004: 161-162). The way that administration and architecture harmonise to “co-articulate” prison units as well as systems is another example of interrelation. The separate and silent systems could have the same architectural formatting, but systematicity is determined by how these forms are given *function*. The same holds for units of the prison⁶⁰, which necessarily need architectural features and accessories (such as equipment or tools), but also an administration determining how they are used. This partnership is built into many of the linguistic compounds themselves: “administration” and “building,” “guard” and “tower,” etc.

⁶⁰ Administration buildings, barbershops, cafeterias, cellblocks, commissaries, chapels, chow halls, industries, reception centres, recreation yards, security units, solitary confinement and/or protective custody units, television rooms, visiting areas, shops, watch towers or guard towers, weight-lifting pods, etc.

More examples: prison guard corruption — as described by London (1998b: 53-54) — is an example of a racketeering-administration interrelation (“ruling by fear” as the hall-men did was only made possible because they were backed up by the guards, who sometimes opened up cells for them to attack “a refractory prisoner inside”; in exchange, they got both a cut of the grafting action and had an informal prisoner delegation manage the prison for them). And an example of tribalism-administration (Jacobs 1979: 5-6):

“Prisoners’ race relations cannot be divorced from prison race relations, the context in which all the actors in the prison organization relate to one another. Until recently [1979], and in all regions of the country, there were few, if any, members of racial minorities on the staffs of prisons. To the extent that race mattered at all, the preferences, biases, and values of individual whites predominated. An account of the prisoner subculture, past or present, which did not consider the influence of the racially dominant group among the staff in structuring the patterns of interaction and opportunities (licit and illicit) among the prisoners would be hopelessly incomplete.”

In this case the “prison guard tribe” is equated to a “white tribe” of keepers opposed to a general “prisoner tribe.” However, this tribe is one that is considered more or less friendly with the “white prisoner tribe” and more or less antagonistic to the “black prisoner tribe.” But, as policies such as affirmative action increased the number of racial minorities on prison staffs, prison administration itself became polarised along tribal lines⁶¹ (ibid. 18):

⁶¹ Example of a tribal, racketeering, and administrative interrelation: in many prisons of the Roman Empire administrators were divided into lictors and jailers (Peters 1995: 20). Lictors guarded prisoners who had committed lesser offenses in a more humane and mild manner, while jailers guarded prisoners who had committed more serious offenses, and who were sent into the lowest parts of the prison, with jailers being responsible for baths and minimal food rations, and the prison registrar being responsible for any escapes and excessive brutality towards the prisoners (ibid.). The prisons had a policy that more desirable parts of the prison could be purchased, what in Medieval England was called *suavitas* (“gentle keeping”) or *iron fees*, wherein prisoners could buy food, fuel, bedding, and other items of comfort or pay to have chains removed. But over time — as the deep inner chambers of Roman prisons began to be filled with Christians — in the name of martyrdom they did not pay for better comforts (ibid. 22, 35). Moreover, many Christian prisoners would receive charity such as food from the outside, which they shared with other inmates, themselves choosing to fast; regardless, many jailers would extort a percentage of the gifts given to prisoners in their charge (ibid. 22). As Christian prisoners began to reject offers and gifts, jailers became more and more angry (ibid.). One could say their racketeering enterprise had fallen through. In this scenario, administration not only blurred with racketeering — extortion of Christian charity within the prison world’s underground economy — but also butted heads with the tribal aspect of Christianity as a religion and way of life.

“[T]he politics of race have created intra-staff tensions, with some white guards doubting the loyalty of black employees[.] Lawsuits have been brought by both black and white guards charging discrimination, and patterns of racial self-segregation are now evident among prison staff as well as among prisoners.”

Because interrelations between all prison world components is possible⁶², it is only for heuristic purposes that one can simplify the prison world into a combination of socioculture and institution⁶³. Gillespie made a similar point (2003: 49):

“Clemmer [...] had portrayed Menard, the maximum-security prison in southern Illinois where he conducted his research, as a universal type. That is, [he] implied that all prisons are identical and that only the individual characteristics of inmates should affect prisonization. [But] current correctional systems increasingly depart from this image, and it is likely that both type of clientele and institutional program exert an effect on social processes[.] [The] changing nature of correctional institutions [have an] influence [on] the process of prisonization.”

This passage is a confirmation of ideas used in the construction of the prison world model. First, both socioculture (“clientele”) and institution (“institutional program”) influence prisonization (here understood in the narrow sense, as “social processes”). Second, prison worlds are ever-changing (have a “changing nature”) on the basis of their dynamic relations, and these dynamics also affect prisonization. Third, prison worlds are non-identical (though it is possible to construct an “image” or “universal type⁶⁴”). Fourth, the micro antecedents (“individual characteristics”) of those entering the prison interrelate with the components of the prison world to determine (wide-sense) prisonization. There has now been a full circle return to the relation between the individual and the prison world, or between variables of the micro and macro antecedent kind

⁶² An example of a tribalism-architecture interrelation, where architecture is imaginatively or magically transformed: when St. Perpetua entered a Roman prison with the micro antecedent of *pregnancy*, post-birth she was “permitted to have her newborn baby with her in prison” and is quoted as saying: “And my prison suddenly became a palace to me, and I would rather have been there than anywhere else,” regardless of its hardships (Peters 1995: 22).

⁶³ Or what Goffman earlier called a “hybrid” when speaking about total institutions (“part formal organization and part residential community” a.k.a. part institution and part socioculture). Goffman also noted that “the barriers within total institutions are both physical and social. The social world in which inmates lives reflects these ever-present barriers and tension” (in Gillespie 2003: 38-39). Here again the physical or physico-formal could be reformulated as the institutional, and the social or socio-residential as the sociocultural (more or less, give or take).

⁶⁴ Clemmer likely viewed the homogeneity of prisons in terms of the archetypal Big Houses of his era of research.

which determine prison experience. There is more to unpack: as a universal type the prison world model may now be made utilisable and applied to diverse, specific prison worlds for use in *analyses*, as well as for the construction of a prison world *typology* (or *typologies*).

2.6.2. On the Semiosphere: Core, Periphery, Boundary

Before doing so, however, the prison world model will be complemented by another, more abstract model (in order to better conceptualise the prison world proper). Prison worlds may be understood as *semiospheres*, or semiotic spaces outside of which semiosis cannot exist, an “ensemble of semiotic formations” functionally preceding “the singular isolated language,” this space being a necessary condition for the existence of any language(s) as such (Lotman 2005). Semiospheres are inter-connected and multi-levelled, “each of them being simultaneously both participant in the dialogue (as part of the semiosphere) and the space of dialogue (the semiosphere as a whole)” (ibid.). *Dialogue* — and its “mechanism” of “enantiomorphism” — is the fundamental (semiotic) law underlying all of semiosis (see ibid.).

Prison worlds are examples of semiospheres *par excellence*. Without an overarching semiospheric context — a space *of* dialogue — the macro antecedents of the prison world would never be able to enter into relations in various densely-dynamic ways. The “law of internal organisation of the semiosphere” is the division between *core* and *periphery*, and there are two ways to conceptualise the core-periphery dynamics of the prison world (see ibid.). The first: Morris and Rothman have stated that ideally the prison would fairly balance between “authority and autonomy,” because while prison “administrators hold the ultimate power at the periphery [...] within the walls power lies with the prisoners” (1995: xiii). A similar thought is echoed by an ex-AB member who stated: “The guards controlled the perimeters of the prison and we controlled what happened inside it” (in Grann 2004: 161). In these examples, the core is equated with the socioculture, this being predicated on a spatio-peripheral analogy. However, cores are necessarily static nuclear structures compared to peripheries, which are amorphous environments of acceleration and dynamism (Lotman 2005: 211-212). The instability inherent to prison socioculture — as in the tribal reorganisation of prison gangs on the basis of religion — as opposed to the stability of the institution (as in the “traditionality” of Alcatraz’s regulations),

would seemingly equate the core with the institution. This is likely a question of perspective and self-description, but also hints at a deeper truth, namely, that what is core and what is periphery *depends* on the specific world, and may also *oscillate* depending on the particularity of the relations in one specific prison context. A new regime, for example, would attempt to replace a gang-controlled (whether tribal or mafia) core, while in another scenario gangs would attempt to replace the core of institutional authority.

The semiosphere is separated from “extra-“ or “non-semiotic” space by an atmospheric, filmic, or membranous *boundary* or border of *bilingual translatable filters* (ibid.). This is where the “transformation of external communications into communications, i.e. the semiotization of incoming materials and the transformation of the latter into information” occurs (ibid. 210). An example of prison world border translation is described in a short story by Jerome Washington (1998). In it, a prisoner called Barracuda has ordered an inflatable sex doll called Sheryl from “a hard core porno magazine,” but upon its arrival a prison guard refuses him access, on the basis not of the law, but of Barracuda’s “perversion” (ibid. 324). Barracuda explains the doll is not for pleasure, but to “take it out in the Main Yard and pimp it to other guys” (ibid.):

“The guard listened with keen ears for a deal, but when Barracuda failed to make him an offer, the guard confiscated the doll as contraband and ordered Barracuda locked in an observation cell. The next day, the guard gave Sheryl to Leon Green-Eyes, another pimp, who promised to cut him in on the profits.”

In this case, the sex doll — in order to find its “place” — needed to be handled on the boundary of the prison world and then “semiotized” into the prison world system, pre-circulation.

Questions of core, periphery, languages, and relations pertain to the dynamics *inside* of the prison world semiosphere, and which have been documented and summarised in the prison world model. Meanwhile, questions of boundary relate not to the prison world semiosphere as a space in dialogue, but to a space *of* dialogue. The dialogic relations of prison worlds to the wider world are malleable. For instance, during Apartheid South African prisons were closed with little to no “filtration” of information on their boundaries, while post-Apartheid a prison such as Pollsmoor “is the railway station of Western Cape prisons”: “It is situated within a stone's throw of Cape Town's ghettos; most awaiting-trial prisoners in the greater Cape Town area are

processed there. There is a great deal of flux, of movement, of exchanges between the streets and the prison” caused by the “recent introduction of mandatory minimum sentencing” which “means that the prisons are increasingly filled with long-term inmates” as well as those awaiting trial, creating a situation of both transit as well as overcrowding within South African prisons (ibid. 2, 4, 50-56). However, on the synchronic scale Pollsmoor is unique with regards to its “openness”: agricultural outstation prisons and “jails of the Western Cape hinterland are quieter, more stable” with regards to external-internal interchange (ibid. 4, 50-56).

Any (sub-)component of the prison world — no matter its categorical level — can be itself seen as both or either of a semiosphere as well as a “language,” with the prison world total being the most-encompassing semiosphere; without the prison world semiosphere, its components and relations could not exist. The multi-levelled nature of the semiosphere — the “[v]ertical isomorphism, which exists between structures located on different hierarchical levels” (Lotman 2005: 216) — is another way of describing the hierarchical nature of the many different (sub-)components composing the prison world. And the ability to describe internal, inter-connected semiospheric relations using the notion of dialogue also allows for a clearer formulation of what is meant by prison world relations (whether intra- or inter-).

For example: the downfall of the AB was a very concrete example of a conflictual interrelation between tribalism and racketeering (Grann 2004). This conflict was represented by the fact that one of the AB’s most high-ranking members sports, “without any apparent irony,” the tattoo of a Star of David on one arm — to signify his Jewish heritage — and a swastika on the other (ibid. 160). How is one to interpret this? First off, it is highly enantiomorphic, not only concerning placement of the bodily left and right but also with the highly-jarring juxtaposition of symbolic antitheses. But at a deeper level in the context of the prison world, it is an expression or speech act condensing the entire conflict between tribalism and racketeering: if the AB was a “pure” tribe these tattoos would be unacceptable, but as an outfit not concerned with white supremacy as such, being Jewish — or Native American, or working with Mexican gangs such as the MM, or collaborating with Charles Manson for the purpose of drug smuggling — is deemed acceptable (ibid. 165). Many of these practices — as well as the targeting of “innocents” and non-warriors — eventually upset many members, who flipped on the gang to the authorities.

2.6.3. On the Permeability of the Prison World

The semiospheric nature of the prison world is made evident in contemporary prison ethnography. As seen, the latter concerns itself with studying both *within* as well as *around* the prison. This research emphasises the *permeability* or *porosity* of prison boundaries, deconstructing the difference between the *intramural* and the *extramural*, instead focusing on the *prison-society nexus* and the “articulation between the internal and the external worlds” (Cunha 2014: 217-218, 227). The permeability of prison *boundaries* is an obvious example of the translation mechanisms situated at the border of the semiosphere, which create dialogic “contexts,” “interfaces,” “junctures,” or “nexus” (various forms of embeddedness and mediation). According to Cunha, the prison may extend into the outside world in two ways: prison as *institution*, and in terms of the “social and subjective world” of prisoners behind bars (ibid. 218, 224). In the context of this thesis, the latter shall be termed the prison as *socioculture*.

The prison as institution extends into the outside world above all else with regards to the wider workings of the state⁶⁵ (ibid. 219). The level of the prison is one level where different levels of policies — procedures, programs, regimes, etc. — of the state — *both consistent and contradictory* — “may be approached ethnographically through the workings of [one of] its institutions” (ibid.). That is, the rationales and policies of the state are visible in the rationales and policies of the prison institution, where they are made manifest in its “everyday activities,” agents, and practices (ibid. 219, 221, 222). These studies also examine the prison in relation to the security society, as a “key institution for a sociology of poverty regulation and a historical anthropology of the state” (ibid. 219). They look at the prison’s relation to managerialism in the context of the crisis in corrections — including the way prison as institution has become evermore bureaucratised, centralised, formalised, and standardised — as well as the changes in purpose of surveillance and work, and the shift in institutional “ethos” and “recruitment pool” (from social workers to those involved in the legal-criminological field)⁶⁶ (ibid. 220-222).

⁶⁵ The state itself is not, however, “a singular undifferentiated entity, with clear-cut boundaries and a consistent, uniform action,” but a “diversified web” — of agents, institutions, “rationales,” practices, etc. — “that coexist in a complex and sometimes contradictory manner” (Cunha 2014: 219).

More than just the prison's relation to the state, these studies also look at its relation to "a global market of penal products" such as reintegration industries, which do not emerge from the confines of nation-states (making them "contrary to classic disciplinary governance") (ibid. 220).

For Cunha, the prison as institution also extends into the outside world in terms of its *physicality*. Studies in social ecology, for instance, examine the "peri-carceral space" — the "proximate sociospatial environment," "immediate spatial vicinity," or "sensitive perimeter" — of the prison institution in terms of its "penal stigma" (or lack thereof), including the two opposed processes of socio-symbolic absorption (acceptance) as opposed to relegation (distancing) (into the surrounding area, town, society, etc.) (ibid. 222-223).

The prison as socioculture also extends into the outside world in many ways. For instance, many studies look at the prison's "social and relational perimeters," or the way in which imprisonment affects *social networks*: of classes, communities, ethnic-racial minorities, family members of all types (for example: between parents and children), formal and informal structures of social support, friends, kin, life partners, neighbourhoods, and so on, from local to transnational levels (ibid. 223). That imprisonment has a "collective dimension" that extends "beyond prison walls" — an existence and presence which "depletes" certain communities (such as classes or races) more than others — produces a whole range of different effects: civic, economic, emotional, familial, financial, interpersonal, material, moral, political, residential, social, etc.⁶⁷ (ibid.).

The prison as socioculture also extends into the outside world with regards to the prisoner subculture paradigm (ibid. 224):

"And although at its early stages both sides of the [deprivation-importation] debate converged in their common recognition of a relatively unified community, stabilized by a single specific cultural form regardless of its origins [...] the prisoner community would, in later years, be described as fragmented into mutually hostile factions, with their own normative codes to which only their members were bound [...] divided along ethnic-minority lines, gang membership, and violent groups from the street drug economy[.]"

⁶⁷ Important concepts in this tradition include the "extended carceral experience" (the notion that imprisonment does not just affect the one serving time, but also reconfigures their families and important relationships), "secondary prisonization" (used to describe the experience of women whose prison visits "become a distorted but manageable substitute site for domestic and conjugal life"), and the figure of the "bad mother" (Cunha 2014: 223).

As the importation model grew in status — and researchers such as Jacobs proposed studying beyond the prison walls — “[e]xternal structural conditions, as well as cultural conditions, therefore became more present in ethnographic accounts of the prisoner community and of its permeability to the outside world” (ibid. 224). While early studies of this sort focused on the prisoner backgrounds which created the unique “cultural forms, social relations, and structures, to the forms of power, adaptation, and resistance deployed” inside of prisons by prisoners, later ones looked at the actual ways “prison walls did not entirely cut off prisoners from their social worlds” and how “instead, segments of this world were also transposed into prison and continued to back previous social identities” (ibid. 224-225). Prison social life was seen as an extension of neighbourhood and outer world — street gangs and the street drug economy, the urban streets — and was thus understood in terms of a subterranean porosity, based on not only class or ethnicity, but also a (criminal) subcultural element (see ibid. 225). The prison as socioculture was therefore not seen as a “self-referential” “micro social scene,” but as a networked “translocality” whose temporality was “synchronized [...] with the rhythms of the outside world” (ibid. 225).

The new ethnographic concern with the permeability of the prison has challenged Goffman’s following statement: “Every total institution can be seen as a kind of dead sea in which little islands of vivid, encapturing activity appear” (in Steinberg 2004: 13). It has thus challenged the Goffmanian model of the total institution, or ‘Goffmanian-type depictions of the prison as “a world apart” ’ (Cunha 2014: 222, 225). Instead, according to Cunha the prison may extend into the external world as either institution or socioculture, and within the latter two categories also in two different ways: as institution in terms of either state governance or physicality, and as socioculture in terms of either social network or subterraneity. It seems that Cunha’s categories — of the ways in which the prison world may extend into the *outside* world — *correspond exactly* to the components of the prison world (the macro antecedents *inside* of the prison), but on a wider scale:

Prison World Semiosphere as Space <i>of</i> Dialogue (Internal):	Prison World Semiosphere as Space <i>in</i> Dialogue (External):
Socioculture ↔ Subculture	
Institution ↔ Institutions	
Tribalism ↔ Social Network	
Racketeering ↔ Subterraneity	
Administration ↔ State Governance	
Architecture ↔ Physicality	

From this it could be argued that — in a certain sense — prison worlds as such mirror the wider structure of what could be called *civilisation*, being semiospheric “microcosms” — “iconic signs,” “isomorphisms,” “models,” etc. — of the external world. As a space *of* dialogue, the prison world semiosphere is the (semiotic) context wherein components (“languages,” “smaller” semiospheres) relate. As a space *in* dialogue, these componentio-linguistic-semiospheric formations — on whatever level, whether an architectural right angle, harmonious tribal-racketeering unit⁶⁸, or institution as a whole — extend outwards and become part of larger semiospheres.

In the above table, this extension takes the following forms: socioculture to subculture, institution to one of many institutions, tribalism to social network, racketeering to subterraneity, administration to state governance, and architecture to a wider physicality or landscape (it excludes all the possible extensions of smaller categories or relational formations). The ways in which different components may enter into dialogue within the prison world, and thus create

⁶⁸ Jacobs gave an example of such a unit (1979: 15-17). As the tribal dominance of blacks — and the tribal incompetence of whites — determines the “formal organization” (“client culture,” “opportunity structures”) of the prison world socioculture and the status of individuals within its population, tribalism therefore also determines the “exploitation matrix” of the prison world’s racketeering component: in general, lower-class blacks are dominant, followed by middle-class blacks, followed by lower-class whites, and finally middle-class whites. In one specific Ohio juvenile prison, this took the following form: a black leader called a “heavy,” three or four black “lieutenants,” a third group composed of eight or so black “alright guys” and eight or so white “chumps” who together did the bidding of the leaders, and on the bottom one or two whites who were the sexual “scapegoats” of each cottage. In this scenario, paramilitary organisation was superimposed onto the holiness of a singular black “tribe,” whose dominance allowed them to make gains both tribally (racially), as well as economically. This is visible in the fact that whites were embedded in organisational structure, while at the same time being discriminated against.

complex formations — as well how these components and/or formations may extend and enter into dialogue with the outside world — are so massively complicated they are likely innumerable. In short: the relation of semiospheres as such to other semiospheres — and all of these semiospheres within one potential *all-subsuming semiosphere* — is the way of conceptualising internal and external prison world relations on the most abstract level⁶⁹.

2.6.4. On Types of Analyses and Typology

It is thus possible to return to the utility of the prison world model (now also including the prison world as semiosphere model). Analyses of the prison world may come in three forms. A *centripetal* analysis begins by taking a specific prison world as a whole and then elucidating its various components and relations; it looks “inward” at the prison as such. For example: take an ancient Roman prison, or an American prison during the era of World War II. One could start by identifying the tribal aspect: in 198 BC, one Roman prison was characterised by “a revolt by Carthaginian prisoners of war” imprisoned following the Punic Wars (Peters 1995: 18), while many World War II-era American federal prisons were characterised by large groupings of Jehovah’s Witnesses who were imprisoned en masse for draft resistance⁷⁰ (Jacobs 1979: 8). Then racketeering components could be looked at: while American prisons were likely variations of London’s barter economy perched on the precipice of the race relations era, the racketeering aspect of Roman prisons may have been minimal to non-existent (Peters 1995: 8):

⁶⁹ For example: the term “subculture” is here used because it is only *in relation* to the external world that one can technically speak of a subdivision of culture; *inside* of the prison world as such, prisoner organisation — though historically called a “subculture” (or later on multiple “subcultures”) — is simply a world-specific *socioculture*. For instance, Goffman’s understanding of the custodians in a total institution is predicated on the idea that the latter leave while remaining “part of the conventional sociocultural order” and that the “inmate world involves a distinct social organization that is at odds with sociocultural sub-systems on the outside” (in Gillespie 2003: 38-39). That is, “total institutions create and maintain a particular kind of tension between the home world and the institutional world and use this persistent tension as a strategic leverage in the management of men, are juxtaposed against conventional society and function as constant reminders of the relations and luxuries that inmates are denied inside prison. In this sense, the inmate subculture stands independent of the dominant sociocultural order” (ibid.).

⁷⁰ Jacobs also speculates that Jehovah’s Witnesses might have influenced the Black Muslims and their need to be recognised as a group with its own “authority structure and communal interests,” not just as individuals (1979: 8).

‘After the successful suppression of [the] revolt [...] the consuls ordered the lower magistrates to double their prison precautions. “So at Rome watchmen patrolled the streets, the minor magistrates were ordered to make inspections, and the three officials in charge of the quarry-prisons to increase their vigilance, and the praetors sent letters around to the Latin confederacy, that the hostages kept should be placed in close custody, with no opportunity to come out into public places, the prisoners loaded with chains of not less than ten pounds’ weight, and guarded[.]” ’

Under such conditions of guardianship — which characterises this prison world’s administrative side⁷¹ — it is likely that racketeering was very marginal in this prison world. As for the administration of World War II-era American prisons, the tenets of Big Houses likely held. And finally architecture: the imposing presence and materiality of the quarry-prison holds in Rome, while the architecture of the Big House again (most likely) holds for the USA.

A *centrifugal* analysis takes one aspect of the prison world and studies “outwards” from it, and could begin in one of two ways: either emphasising one particular component of a specific prison world, or emphasising one particular phenomenon of a specific prison world. This type of analysis would then examine how the component or phenomenon relates to other components or phenomena of the prison world. In some cases, the choice of component and/or phenomenon overlaps. For example, the work of Steinberg (2004) on the Number gangs of South Africa is exemplary material for a centrifugal analysis: the Number gangs are examples of prison world tribalism *par excellence*, and interrelate as a phenomenal manifestation of the tribal component in complex and unique ways with all of racketeering, administration, and architecture. Both centripetal and centrifugal analyses focus on the inside of prison worlds.

Meanwhile, a *translational* analysis focuses on internal-external relations between a prison world and the outside world. Since the translation mechanisms on the boundaries of the semiosphere are *bilingual*, there is a question of *directionality*: one may speak of either *in*-translation or, conversely, *out*-translation. For example: street gang allegiances influencing

⁷¹ In most Roman prisons of the time of the Empire, prison world administration could be harsh. For instance, prisoners carrying the micro antecedent of *prisoner of war* (of being captured in a military battle) were always confined in chains (Peters 1995: 19-20). And when the Macedonian king Perseus was captured in the second century and imprisoned in Alba Fucens, his jailers threw him down a sword and noose, urging him to commit suicide, which he refused to do; Perseus survived many mistreatments until he eventually died because his captors “undertook to kill him by depriving him of sleep” (ibid. 19).

prison, prison tribes influencing film (*in*-tribalism and *out*-tribalism); drug smugglers bringing narcotics in, visitors trying to smuggle letters out (*in*-racketeering and *out*-racketeering); centralised directives or statutes such as the European Prison Rules, a hypothetical prison guard strike (*in*-administration and *out*-administration); prison renovations, an underground hole, tunnel, or gap in the fence leading to a prison escape (*in*-architecture and *out*-architecture⁷²); etc. All of these three types of analysis are procedures applicable to any and all prison worlds.

After analyses have been completed, a comparative approach is thereafter made possible (for instance, one could compare the Roman and American prisons analysed centripetally). Analyses of specific prison worlds may elucidate the *tendencies* found in them, or which components “dominate” others in specific prison settings. Here it is important to note that while in certain prisons certain macro antecedents may be more marginal than others, all components of the prison world model necessarily exist in all prison worlds. Nonetheless, on the basis of the comparative approach it is thus possible to construct a prison world typology (or typologies). For instance, supermax prisons are prison worlds dominated by the institutional, while many South American prisons are dominated by the sociocultural. And prisons like Pollsmoor can oscillate between the two. For example, Steinberg noted that between 4pm and 7am “between 40 and 60 men are locked in a cell designed to house 18” — a fifteen-hour time span where gangs control the prison — but for the other nine hours of the day, warders keep a watchful eye over things (mingling, exercising, clothes-washing, etc.) (ibid. 2-3). The latter is also linked to the phenomenon of oscillation between core and periphery.

Typologising prison worlds can also help specify general attributes of certain types of prison worlds, and help refine the prison world model. This can be done by asking questions. For example: is a prison world dominated by the sociocultural also dominated by intercommunication, while a prison dominated by the institutional dominated by *autocommunication* (Lotman 1990)? Pertinent material here is Grann’s overview of the

⁷² Hamm has pointed out another example of *out*-architecture: in many prisons — notably in Middle Eastern and Northern African areas, such as in Jordan — cable television and Internet websites “reaching deep into global communication systems that thrive on Islamic militancy” are used by prisoners to conduct terrorist activities (2007a: 33-35). Similarly, white nationalist terrorists in American prisons sometimes have cells which mirror printing presses and publishing houses on the outside, used to create and then disseminate ideological materials (ibid.).

intercommunicative systems of the AB (including the use of “urine writing” and complex codes such as the Baconian cipher) in the many socioculturally-dominated prisons they inhabit (see 2004: 166), as well as the autocommunication undergone by the character Meursault while isolated in an institutionally-dominated prison as described in Albert Camus’ *The Outsider* (2010). Some authors also distinguish between collective and individual violence within prisons, and an analogous question holds: do sociocultural prisons emphasise collective violence, and institutional ones individual? Or another question, on a lower hierarchical level: does a prison world dominated by tribalism emphasise what Ferdinand Tönnies called *Gemeinschaft*, and a prison world dominated by racketeering *Gesellschaft*?

Furthermore, one could ask about the relation between the prison world model and two other quadripartite models: Henri Gobard’s tetralinguistic model of language functions⁷³ (see Deleuze and Felix Guattari 1986: 23-24), and Francis Bacon’s four idols of the mind⁷⁴. That is: is a tribalism-dominated prison characterised by the mythic language function? An empirical study and discourse-analytic approach to the prison world could theoretically answer this question (the next question would thus concern the proper methodology used in eliciting this discourse). And regarding consequences of prisonization, does a released — or “*out-translated*” — individual leaving a racketeering-dominated prison exit with his mind clouded by the idol or fallacy of the marketplace? To answer these highly speculative questions, the various quadripartite models must first be commensurated with the prison world model — if possible — and then comparative approaches based on specific analyses must be made.

⁷³ Mythic, referential, vehicular, and vernacular.

⁷⁴ Cave, marketplace, theatre, and tribe.

Conclusion

The primary objective of this Master's Thesis was to construct a model of what was called the prison world. Each prison world is composed of four major macro antecedents: tribalism, racketeering, administration, and architecture. Each of these components is itself composed of (sub-)components, and are themselves (sub-)components of the wider categories of socioculture (tribalism and racketeering) and institution (administration and architecture). The prison world is also characterised by componential intra- and interrelations: every component is a set of intra-relations, as well as a set in various interrelations with all other components. This makes of the prison world a complex, multi-levelled, hierarchical structure. The secondary objective of this work was to complement the prison world model with the model of the semiosphere. The prison world can thus be understood as a semiosphere — a place *of* dialogue — characterised by a core and a periphery, and its components may be conceptualised as languages and/or semiospheres as well. The prison world is never fully contained, but always necessarily inter-connected: it is characterised by a permeable boundary, which also makes of it a place *in* dialogue with the semiospheres of the outside world. The nature of both types of dialogue is highly complex.

Prison worlds are heterogeneous, and every prison world is unique. The specificity of a prison world — for instance, in terms of which of its macro components predominates — determines the prisonization of every individual entering this setting. Prisonization as such is a general and somewhat-paradoxical process, initiatory rite of passage, or “becoming” characterised by enculturation, disculturation, and a distinct liminal period, and is dependent on the micro antecedent variables⁷⁵ carried by each and every individual which enter into relations with the macro antecedents of the prison world. Prisonization determines an individual's prison experience and always necessarily has consequences, but is also an intermittent process.

⁷⁵ Other than those listed prior, many more could be described. *Psychopathy* could possibly be a micro antecedent. Many AB members, for instance, speak about “the beast inside,” or “the urge” they have, or describe themselves as “angry motherf—ker[s],” or are described by others in terms of having a God complex (Grann 2004: 160, 164, 168). Whether one enters prison with the psychology of Napoleon or the frailty of a boy prisoner doubtlessly determines prisonization. Other micro antecedents could include *artistic talent* (which in combining with the prison world could produce myriad artworks: paintings, prison literature, etc.), *charisma* (such as with radical imams), or even a common aspect of modern discourse on the prison: being a *carrier* of HIV/AIDS, or other diseases or illnesses.

The prison world model aims at being scientific, but nonetheless possesses features of play-type models. The prison world model is — *at best* — a fourth order model (construction, fiction, interpretation). This model also aims at being a universal type, but due to the specificity of individual prison worlds it is acknowledged that this model can only ever be anticipatory, appraised, and used in a clinically-inferential manner. The prison world model has utility in, say, prison ethnography, because it allows for the further construction of three types of analyses: centripetal, centrifugal, and translational. On the basis of analyses it is possible to initiate a comparative approach and construct a typology or typologies of prison worlds. Typological approaches also aid in elucidating typological features of prison worlds, and further refine the prison world model.

A preliminary sketch for future research into the prison world has already been made, though it is still rudimentary in form. Some directions have already been mentioned. Very generally, more research is needed with regards to the relation between the prison world and the wider civilisation: to what extent do the two truly mirror one another, and what phenomena or effects do prison world extensions and processes of translation — both *in-* and *out-* — produce? Other than this general research direction focusing on the prison world's relations to the external or outside world, more research is needed with regards to the internal nature of the prison world. Firstly, all types of analyses of specific prison worlds based on the prison world model need to be conducted, and thereafter typologies must be constructed. Secondly, once typologised it would be worth investigating the specific attributes of specific types of prison worlds.

But the next step in truly understanding the prison world lies in the construction of a new theoretical framework able to conceptualise its complex relations and internal dynamics. This framework is rooted in the concept of the semiosphere and the fundamental semiotic process of dialogue, but is also a synthesis of five other major ideas: the idea of *languages* as described in Tartu-Moscow cultural semiotics, the idea of *discipline* as described by Foucault (1995), the idea of *tricksterism* as described by William J. Hynes (1997), the idea of the *principle of alternation* as described by Lotman and Boriss Uspensky (1978), and the entire paradigm of *actor network theory* as described by John Law (2009). This new framework aims to be comprehensive, and subsumes many other theories. For instance, the prison world is a place dominated by

*bricolage*⁷⁶, a phenomenon documented by Lévi-Strauss (1966). For Hynes, bricolage is just one subdivision of the general phenomenon of tricksterism (1997). Hynes' wider view is thus able to conceptualise a phenomenon permeating the entire prison world — bricolage as such — into a more-encompassing framework. Thereafter, combining Hynes' ideas with, say, Foucault's, invites an even bigger theoretical subsumption.

This work shall thus conclude with a perhaps — at least for the moment — mystical statement, one which is to be clarified in future research: *dialogue between expressions of languages in the actor networks of the prison world semiosphere function according to a principle of alternation in the mode of “discipline—tricksterism.”* Inasmuch as this mystical statement shall be elucidated in further research, it may also be stated that the ideas and the model presented in this thesis will also be refined in future works, whether by the author or by others. Indeed, the critiques and contributions of prison ethnographers and other empirical analysts will be crucial in determining the strengths and weaknesses of these ideas; theoretical critiques and contributions will also be of the utmost importance. Here again, the notions of appraisal, anticipation, and clinical inference are central. Finally, the attempt at constructing an overarching and all-encompassing system conducive to conceptualising the prison world in all its complexity, is also the attempt at laying a solid theoretical groundwork for the future development of an explicit, massively-diverse paradigm for a *prison semiotics* — or again, *semiotics of the prison* — as such.

⁷⁶ The use of fruit and toilet bowls to make pruno, spoons to make knives, pepper used as a weapon thrown in the eyes, a man used as a woman, a hollowed-out book used as hiding place, urine used as ink, etc.

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Resümee (Summary in Estonian)

Vanglamaailma modelleerimine

Magistritöö põhieesmärk on luua mudel n.ö vanglamaailmast.

Töö on jaotatud kaheks osaks, millest esimese osa eesmärk on kontekstualiseerida ülejäänud tööd. Esimene osa on omakorda jaotatud kolmeks peatükiks, mis käsitlevad järgmisi teemasid: vanglauringute historiograafia ning *mudeli* ja *vanglamaailma* vastavad definitsioonid. Nende peatükkide sisemised jaotused käsitlevad ka nende nähtuste asjakohaseid kaalutlusi. Töö teine osa on jaotatud kuueks peatükiks, millest esimesed viis käsitlevad vanglamaailma mudeli erinevaid komponente ning nende komponentide sisemisi suhteid. Kuues peatükk toob kõik komponendid kokku diagrammatilises vormis ja loob vanglamaailma mudeli kui niisuguse, käsitledes ka vanglamaailma komponentide omavahelisi suhteid. Töö teise osa kuues peatükk täiendab ka vanglamaailma mudelit, kasutades Juri Lotmani semiosfääri mõistet. Kuna magistritöö uurimisobjekt on vanglamaailm, siis semiosfääri mõistet rakendatakse vanglamaailma mudelile, et saaks üldises mõttes paremini vanglamaailma modelleerida. Kuigi semiosfääri mõiste kasutamine toetab vanglamaailma mudeli loomist, on vanglamaailma mudeli konstrueerimine ja semiosfääri mõiste sellele mudelile rakendamine siiski kaks iseseisvat protseduuri. Võib öelda, et kuna ühte mudelit rakendatakse teisele mudelile (semiosfääri mudel on abstraktsem kui vanglamaailma mudel), siis toimub metateoreetiline analüüs.

Magistritöö tuum seisneb selles, et vanglamaailm koosneb neljast põhikomponentidest: hõimulikkus, banditism, haldus ja arhitektuur. Nendel komponentidel on kindlad sisemised suhted ning omamoodi jagunevad need ka erinevateks allkomponentideks. Lisaks astuvad komponendid ka omavahelistesse suhetesse. Näiteks hõimulikkus ja banditism moodustavad vanglamaailma sotsiokultuurilise osa ning haldus ja arhitektuur moodustavad vanglamaailma institutsionaalse osa. Seega sotsiokultuur ja institutsioon kokku moodustavad vanglamaailma kui sellise.

Selleks, et vanglamaailm ja selle komponendid saaksid üldse funktsioneerida, peavad nad astuma suhetesse indiviididega. Indiviidid, kes sisenevad vanglamaailma, läbivad protsessi, mida

nimetatakse *vangistumiseks*. Vangistumine on mõnes mõttes paradoksaalne protsess, mis transformeerib indiviidi isiklikul moel, sõltuvalt sellele inimesele omastest teguritest. Vangistumine on pühitsemine vanglamaailma, mida iseloomustab kindel liminaalne osa. Inimese vangistumine määrab ära tema vanglakogemuse ning vangistumisel on alati tagajärjed, mis erinevad sõltuvalt inimesest.

Semiosfäärina iseloomustab vanglamaailma tuum ja perifeeria ning piir, mis koosneb kakskeelsetest tõlkemehhanismidest. Semiosfäärina on vanglamaailm nii see semiootiline ruum, kus toimub dialoog komponentide sees ja/või vahel (aga ka see ruum, kus komponendid saavad üldse eksisteerida ja suhestuda, näiteks hierarhiliselt), kui ka semiootiline ühik dialoogis teiste semiosfääridega. See tähendab, et vanglamaailma iseloomustab ka „läbilaskvus“.

Vanglamaailma mudel, sealhulgas semiosfääri mudel, võimaldab vanglaetnograafidel ja teistel uurijatel analüüsida spetsiifilisi vanglamaailmasid. Analüüsitüüpe on kolm: tsentripetaalne, tsentrifugaalne ja tõkeline. Kui analüüs on valmis, võimaldab vanglamaailma mudel luua vanglamaailmade tüpoloogiat (või tüpoloogiaid), kasutades võrdlevat lähenemist. Selles kontekstis on võimalik välja tuua erinevaid tüpoloogilisi tunnuseid, ja selle kaudu vanglamaailma mudelit ka täiendada.

Lõpetuseks, järgmised uurimused peaksid keskenduma nii vanglamaailma ja välismaailma suhetele kui ka arendama uue teoreetilise raamistiku, mis suudab vanglamaailma keerulist sisedünaamikat mõtestada.

Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks

Mina, _____,
(*autori nimi*)

1. annan Tartu Ülikoolile tasuta loa (lihtlitsentsi) enda loodud teose

_____,
(*lõputöö pealkiri*)

mille juhendaja on _____,
(*juhendaja nimi*)

1. reprodutseerimiseks säilitamise ja üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemise eesmärgil, sealhulgas digitaalarhiivi DSpace-is lisamise eesmärgil kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse tähtaja lõppemiseni;
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